

University Faculty Members' Understanding of Their Role: Identity, Power, and Silence

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative study was conducted to explore tenured faculty members' understandings of their roles as professors. Tenure is an institutional means to enact academic freedom, which allows tenured faculty members to investigate topics of their choosing free from external influence. Academic freedom also enables faculty members to be public intellectuals who shape and critique social policies and make knowledge assertions. In effect, the faculty members are institutionally protected to speak truth to power. Purposeful sampling of 9 participants from 2 universities yielded 3 major themes: professorial identity (shaped by such factors as career stage, university culture, and faculty affiliation), professorial power (powers that participants experienced as well as the ways in which they exercised power), and professorial silencing (as a response to fiscal realities coupled with numerous governance issues). While participants were cognizant of the powers that affected their freedoms, they were less aware of the ways in which their position afforded them powers. Subtle but more potent forms of power were at play for tenured professors, but the participants saw themselves as having to work within institutional and financial constraints that limited their freedom to speak out on controversial issues. Faculty members were, thus, silenced and at times chose to self-silence. The context of the present-day university, governance models, and the financial issues affecting universities and departments worked in concert to silence this critical voice in society.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Ask not what freedom is, for it is worth much, it is never static. Ask what the word is being used for. Daniel T. Rodgers (1998, p. 222)

The modern university is rooted historically in its mediaeval predecessors. In certain ways, the university institution has remained the same (e.g., see Belshaw, 1964), and in other ways, it has changed immensely (e.g., see Kerr, 1963/2001). One significant change has been the role universities have taken on socially. The principle of *academic freedom* grew with the evolution of universities to enable faculty members, through mechanisms such as tenure, to engage not just in the instruction of knowledge but also in knowledge creation. Academic freedom affords certain powers to university professors that permit them to make knowledge claims and to teach and publish what and how they see appropriate. It also prevents attempts to thwart this expression.

In recent times, notably in cases throughout North America, academic freedom as the enabling source of this power has been challenged, withdrawn, or undermined (see Doumani, 2006; Shreker, 2007; Turk, 2007). This development can affect faculty members' perceptions of their roles if it changes their beliefs about the powers they wield. For instance, one assumption underlying academic freedom is that it allows academics to serve society by speaking out on pertinent matters of public concern, that is, to serve as *public intellectuals*. However, whether or not university professors recognize and accept their power to serve in this role is unknown. This study was undertaken to explore how university professors perceive the powers granted through tenure and frame their role in making knowledge claims and influencing societal views in their areas of expertise.

## **Background to the Study**

Numerous passionate debates have been published that both exult and lament the existence of academic freedom (e.g., Frydl, 2006; Horn, 1999; Roepnack & Lewis, 2007; Strum, 2006). Although individual professors exert that freedom and accommodate the academic freedom of their peers, their voices have been largely absent from the polemic debates on it. The literature is silent on what most tenured faculty members believe to be its purpose. The question, then, is whether faculty members who have academic freedom understand its functional and societal role and its alignment with the role of the public intellectuals.

In this section, I use a historical case, referred to in the literature as the Underhill case, to develop some of the key ideas concerning the exercise of academic freedom, the power dynamics, and the role of academics that emerge as a result. The Underhill case (Horn, 1999) was a defining event that eventually led to the establishment of academic freedom and tenure in Canadian universities.

### **Vignette**

By 1940, the fall to the Germans of Denmark, Norway, and the Low Countries in Europe indicated that the war was going badly for the Allies. In response, a lively discussion emerged in North America to consider what the situation in Europe meant for Canada and the United States. As part of that ongoing discussion, on August 23, 1940, Professor Frank Underhill (1885–1971) of the History department of the University of Toronto was part of a conference panel discussing “A United American Front.” Around the same time, Prime Minister McKenzie King and President Franklin D. Roosevelt were meeting to discuss a Permanent Joint Board on Defence (Horn, 1999). On August 28,

1940, Professor Underhill, speaking at a public venue in Orillia, Ontario, suggested that Canadians now had “two loyalties, the old one to the British connection involving our backing up of Britain, and the new one to North America involving common action with United States” (cited in Horn, 1999, p. 154).

Underhill’s statement seemed unexceptional to most listeners, but it ignited considerable objection. The president of the University of Toronto, Rev. Henry John Cody, received numerous letters urging that Underhill be fired. Former Prime Minister Arthur Meighen privately urged the Minister of Justice Ernest Lapointe to intern Underhill. Lapointe, in turn, put pressure on President Cody. Underhill was attacked in public newspapers and radio shows for being unpatriotic and speaking on issues in which he had no business (Cameron, 1996). He appeared on numerous live debates to vindicate himself but was often ridiculed in the media.

Members of the Governing Board of the University of Toronto met to issue orders to dismiss Underhill. However, President Cody had received letters from both sides: those demanding that Underhill be dismissed and those supporting his speech based on his analysis of the situation. Cody persuaded the board (with difficulty and in a marathon session) that dismissing Underhill would be undesirable. In recounting his experience to a friend, Underhill wrote, “What saved me was chiefly the argument that it would look terrible in the U.S. just now for a professor to be fired for his pro-American sentiments” (cited in Horn, 1999, p. 156).

This case, a cornerstone of the discussion on academic freedom in Canada, draws attention to the issues of power and academic freedom from the following two vantage points: (a) the role of universities in creating knowledge or contributing to the

knowledge-base and (b) political influences on universities and by implication on faculty members and administrators. I use Underhill's case as an exemplar to highlight the power issues of interest within the study.

### **The Role of Universities in Creating Knowledge**

When Underhill's case emerged, there was no general agreement between faculty members and the public (and administrators) that protected faculty members within Canadian postsecondary institutions. However, earlier that same year, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 1940) had issued the *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, which has since served as the basis of academic freedom and tenure for many universities across North America and the Western world. This statement recognized that university professors were more than mere employees of the governing boards. It was based on *The General Declaration of Principles for Academic Freedom and Tenure*, drafted 25 years prior to the Underhill incident, which read,

The responsibility of the university teacher is primarily to the public itself, and to the judgement of his [sic] own profession; and while, with respect to certain external conditions of his vocation, he accepts a responsibility to the authorities of the institution in which he serves, in the essentials of his professional activity his duty is to the wider public to which the institution itself is morally amenable.

(AAUP, 1915, pp. 22-23)

The AAUP's (1940) statement on Freedom and Tenure clearly granted professors the power to make the kinds of pronouncements that Underhill made. However, Underhill did not escape unscathed. Although he was not dismissed, he was advised by the

president not to speak publically on sensitive issues again. His case highlights the tension that can develop when university professors make knowledge claims. The AAUP (1940) statement grants faculty members the power to make assertions (even if controversial) by way of making it their responsibility to serve the wider public, but exercising that power can be fraught with challenges.

Knowledge claims by university professors is a relatively recent trend in the history of universities. The lineage of modern universities dates back to the Middle Ages. Most postsecondary institutions of that era were largely denominational, and the work of each institution was heavily influenced by the Church of its affiliation. Their chief mission was to teach the word of God, not criticize or critique it. Teachers were not expected (nor were they allowed) to invent new knowledge; offer their own glosses; or question existing norms, attitudes, or stereotypes. Even when the study of the ancient Greeks and Romans was the chief focus, universities were not centrally concerned with creating knowledge.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626), regarded as the catalyst for the scientific revolution, urged in *Novum Organum* (1620) that we cannot keep repeating the truisms of ancient Greek science. He challenged academic institutions (circa 1600) to prosecute their own scientific agenda. Robinson (2004a) cites Bacon as saying, “If all you do is stay with the wisdom of Aristotle, knowledge will never rise higher than where it was when he left off” (p. 11). This call ushered in great scientific activity that eventually contributed to the establishment of academic freedom.

The shift toward secular colleges occurred between 1800 and 1860 when denominational colleges faced internal disorder and financial insolvency (Metzger,

1955). To address internal disorder, the number of faculty members in the colleges was substantially increased. To address financial insolvency, denominational institutions sought support from secular quarters. These remedial actions weakened the religious aspirations of postsecondary institutions. The hold of the Church and its doctrines began to loosen, and the universities gradually turned into secular institutions where faculty members could engage their creative, rational, and critical resources to create new knowledge and to critique the old ways.

The successes of Newton, Galileo, and Copernicus, to name just a few, contributed to an escalation of the scientific method over traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge was characterized by disquisitions offered by the powerful elite, like the Church or the king, whereas the scientific method was characterized by objective observation, repeatable and reproducible experiments, and verifiable results. The motto of the Royal Society of England captured this sentiment. It stated, *Nullius in verba*, meaning “nothing in words” or “on the authority of no one’s words” (Robinson, 2004a, p. 46). In practice, systematic approaches to discovery and claims to knowledge were favoured over assertions made by clergies or rulers. Universities became the institutional means by which to carry out this enterprise, and faculty members were principally responsible for the work. The power to create knowledge, however controversial or contingent, came in the form of academic freedom as it allowed faculty members to pursue truth and its expression in any form they considered appropriate. Underhill’s speech about his assessment of Canada-United Kingdom and Canada-United States relations was consistent with this proclamation of academic freedom.

The argument against Underhill was that the matter of policy he was tackling did not lend itself to science or the scientific method. His assertions were mere personal opinions and ought to have been left for politicians or the heads of state to assert. Knowledge assertions in universities were to come only from those individual professors who were engaged in scientific research enterprises, and academic freedom was first selectively awarded only to those faculty members who were involved in the hard sciences (Horn, 1999). Over time, such myopic views concerning the sources of authentic knowledge gave way to multiple ways of knowing (epistemologies) and the objects of knowledge (ontologies). Consequently, academic freedom, by way of academic tenure, came to be awarded to faculty members irrespective of their fields of study. The AAUP's (1940) *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* stated,

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth.

Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society.

The statement made no reference to hard-core science. Additionally, it explicitly granted individual professors the right to engage in extramural activities. The power to make

knowledge claims as inscribed in the academic freedom statement of the AAUP (1940) became the basis of academic freedom in universities all over North America. It was enshrined in collective agreements and operational policies. The inclusion of extramural rights in the AAUP (1940) statement linked academic freedom with the right to shape the policies of society. However, as Wildavsky (1979) points out,

The technical base of policy analysis is weak. In part its limitations are those of social science: innumerable discrete propositions of varying validity and uncertain application, occasionally touching but not necessarily related, like beads on a string... Unlike social science, however, policy analysis must be prescriptive; arguments about correct policy, which deal with the future, cannot help but be willful and therefore political. (p. 16)

Wildavsky's comments imply that there are limits to the scientific method in policy matters, and any attempts to classify policy study as purely objective and amenable to scientific methods is counter-productive. Therefore, historical contexts, which are not purely objective or scientific, can and should be acceptable sources of knowledge when explicating academic freedom issues.

### **Political Influences on Universities**

The educational enterprise of universities has been closely linked with the political domain because the objectives of the state are often achieved through educational initiatives. This phenomenon can be traced back to mediaeval times. As Robinson (1997) explains, the emperor Charlemagne unified what is now France, parts of Germany, and Northern Europe. He established little abbey schools throughout his kingdom for the populace to learn Latin so that state/government/official business could



be carried out in one official language. He understood that education was a means by which to bring different people together. The educational initiative itself, thus, became a political undertaking. Similarly in modern times, Bok (1982) and Kerr (1963/2001) note that North American universities were semi-independent and relatively free from external constraints prior to the world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As enrolments increased and the role of the universities in communities heightened, political influences also grew. By the time of Underhill's assertions, the political influences on the functions of faculty members had become common.

In Underhill's case, the role of politics and politicians was explicit, but there are instances when these pressures are implicit. To understand this influence, two things must be done: (a) explain what is meant by political influence and (b) highlight the relevant connections between universities and politics.

Political influence is any action that legislative bodies exert on a university and its operations. Easton (1965) defined it as "those interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society" (p. 21). This definition permits the inclusion of both formal and informal governmental institutions as well as the political beliefs and acts of citizens as individuals and as groups. It also provides a broad spectrum necessary to establish the connection between political systems and universities.

Sources of political influence on university operations and faculty members' work are both external and internal (Hum, 2001). External forces include restrictions imposed by government, grant funding agencies, politicians, and social norms and conventions. In Underhill's case, it was chiefly external influences that demanded his dismissal. Internal influences are "conservative forces [that] argue that the pursuit of diversity in curriculum,

hiring, teaching, research, and student admissions violates academic freedom” (Mojab, 1995, p. 18). Both internal and external political forces exert pressure on university faculty members’ roles. Furthermore, these forces differ depending on the local context, and as a result, there is no singular or universal conception of “a university.” The impact of political pressures, however, is common amongst institutions that identify and are perceived as universities.

How did these connections between universities and politics emerge? The answer is closely connected to the emergence of the present day academy. The earliest of universities had a clear mission: to initiate and educate the youth to be decent men (Newman, 1852/1960; Robinson, 1997). However, because “a university is not outside, but inside the general fabric of a given era” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 3), it shapes and moulds as per the dictates of the times.

It [the university] is not something historic, something that yields as little as possible to forces and influences that are more or less new. It is on the contrary... an expression of the age, as well as an influence operating upon both present and future. (Flexner, 1930, cited in Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 3)

Universities complied with the societal needs for more efficient farmers, engineers, and veterinarians, *inter alia*, and became the place not only to incline the best minds in the exercise of self-perfection (Robinson, 1997) but also to train individuals towards more instrumental ends (Kerr, 1963/2001). This departure from the historical conception of the purposes of university as formulated by Newman (1852/1960) in *Idea of a University* to more instrumental ends as described by Flexner (1930) in *Idea of a Modern University* is evident in the explosion of numerous subjects and specializations in universities.

Universities have devolved into a federation or “service station for the general public” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 4). This shift has reconfigured the place of universities in societies and infused more power to the chief actors within them – faculty members and administration.

These changes came as a result of political pressures (Kerr, 1963/2001). As universities were called to do more and more in exchange for the financial support they obtained from the public purse, they became more prominent features in their communities and societies (Bok, 1982). From that standpoint, universities and faculty members no longer operated in relative isolation from the communities in which they lived. In these universities, the success of faculty members was measured by their contributions to society, including settling divisive moral and partisan claims. This, according to Bok (1982), ran against the tenor of academic freedom: “The doctrine of academic freedom is founded on a conviction that it is extremely hazardous for a university to render moral and political judgments of [any] kind” (p. 34). Bok explicates the role of universities in this way:

The function of the university is not to define and enforce proper moral and political standards for society. It has not been asked to assume this role nor does it have the power to carry it out effectively. The function of the university is to engage in teaching and research of the highest attainable quality. When it strays from this task and tries to take the place of public officials by rendering its own judgments on political questions, it runs intolerable risks of making unwise decisions, diminishing the quality of its faculty, and exposing itself to continuous

pressures from all of the groups and factions that may wish to impose their political convictions on the university's work. (p. 35)

Bok is suggesting that the university institution itself should refrain from making political and moral alliances so that faculty members and students can pursue free inquiry without the pressures to uphold an institutional position. Only when the institution is free from political influences will members be able to freely make truth claims, however unpopular, contingent, or disturbing.

Is that the case? Are universities free of political influences? Are its members permitted to deviate from norms, customs, and various impositions? In the book *Governments and the University*, Cooper, Davis, Parent, and McConnell (1966) show that the links between governments and universities have grown stronger since the early days of universities. They are now being used as an instrument of governments to engineer the desired workforce. Cooper et al. argue that this entanglement cannot be easily undone and it poses serious concern for academic freedom and the independence of universities and its members. For different reasons, Mayer (1966) reaches the same conclusion. He notes that some 19<sup>th</sup> century educators, like Friedrich Froebel and Horace Mann, hoped for universal education that would develop the foundations of authentic democracy, but that these hopes have not been realized. Furthermore, Mayer (1966) laments that “education has been misused on a gigantic scale so that free inquiry is curbed and the state exercises almost total power over the lives and destinies of its citizens” (p. 6). Educators carry some of the blame:

To some extent, education has contributed to its deficiencies of our time. It has often been neutral regarding the great issues of our age. It has often succumbed to

the forces of intolerance and censorship. It has frequently collaborated with dictatorship, as was the case in Germany where many professors supported the barbaric ideas of Hitler and... extolled the concept of racial superiority. Even in democratic nations, education often upholds negative ideals. There is a preoccupation with rigid standards and with externals. Physical resources are emphasized while teachers are regarded with condescension and are censored when they attempt to use insight on controversial issues. Education frequently produces the narrow expert who reaches for the approval of his colleagues rather than be concerned with the larger issue of public policy. (Mayer, p. 6)

These are harsh words. However, if universities are expected to remain neutral and if faculty members and universities are not carrying out the associated tasks, then Mayer's criticism is valid.

Conversely, when academics have taken on the mantle to critique the establishment or governments, the adverse conditions created for those faculty members have sometimes caused them to abandon their employment, leave the country, or censor themselves so as not to incur the wrath of existing power configurations of society. Examples from the former Soviet Union are abundant, but there have been other prominent cases in North America (for examples, see Doumani, 2006; Shreker, 2007; Turk, 2007). It is not hard to speculate on the reasons why it might be difficult for a professor to oppose prevailing trends. One answer is self-interest. If one deviated from the customs, norms, or fads, one risked losing employment, as was the case with Underhill. To ensure the risk of losing their employment did not inhibit professors from

standing up to or challenging norms, trends, and future trajectories, academic tenure came onto the scene (Cameron, 1991).

Academic tenure was the institutional means of providing security to carry out academic freedom. The idea of academic freedom, then, enables the two forces:

On the one hand, there is the prerogative of the public to set policy, determine direction, and fix support: we speak of public *control*, not merely public sponsorship or influence. On the other hand, there is the prerogative of the teaching profession to govern its own practice: the teacher is committed to teaching truth as he [sic] sees it and to following the truth wherever it leads.

Recognizing this tension, the late Charles Beard used to argue that a democratic society should support universities which would then be left free to criticize the society that support them. (Cremin, 1965, pp. 95-96)

Three central features emerge from the preceding discussion: First, with the increased prominence of universities in societies, the power of universities has elevated in comparison with the power that they had in the pre-Industrial era. Second, the power of the universities is directly proportional to the power the professoriate exerts on issues of public concern. Third, the means to exert this professorial power is to be a public intellectual, however differently defined and understood by different individuals.

### **Statement of the Problem Context**

The preceding discussion describes the power faculty members have by virtue of academic freedom and tenure. The discussion also establishes the need and occasion for faculty members to voice their concerns publically. The extremes of the argument, depicted in Table 1, are these: On the one hand, the privilege of academic freedom has

made faculty members entirely self-serving (see Allen, 1997; Chait, 2002; Magrath, 1997; Wright, 2004), and on the other hand, academic freedom is essential in order for faculty members to carry out their duties (see De George, 1997; Robinson, 2004b; Turk, 2007).

These arguments are sometimes idealistic and romantic and sometimes too harsh and cutting. But what has been left out of the argument is what professors with academic freedom perceive as their role, their influence, and their power within society. Beacher and Trowler (2001) use the metaphor of “tribes” to ascribe similarities among faculty members from the same disciplinary affiliation and differences among faculty members from different disciplines. These tribal differences might also influence how academic freedom is understood and enacted by faculty members. By exploring professors’ perceptions around issues of power, public intellectuals, and impediments in discharging their duties, their own voices can contribute to the otherwise theoretical debate.

The infringements and trespasses on academic freedom and tenure are neither infrequent (Turk, 2007) nor straightforward (Shreker, 2007). However, the cases that play out in the media are high-profile cases, such as the Olivieri case, the Rushton case, and the Westhues case. These high-profile cases have been thoroughly analyzed and have generated animated discussions by defenders and prosecutors of academic freedom, tenure, and the role of the professoriate, in both popular media as well as scholarly works. But in addition to these cases, there are incidents that do not escalate to that level of scrutiny. These deal with the lived lives of academics on a day-to-day basis. How the power levers are understood in the daily lives of professors who have academic freedom and tenure is the knowledge gap addressed in this study.

Table 1

*Summary of Arguments For and Against Academic Freedom*

<b>Arguments for Academic Freedom</b>	<b>Arguments against Academic Freedom</b>
Provides freedom from oppressive forces within the university system and ideological tyranny (Cameron, 1991; Turk & Manson, 2007)	Only a few faculty members have academic freedom, and others still carry out their responsibility without academic freedom, so why should some have it? (Chait, 1997, 2002)
Provides freedom to pursue higher ends (Aristotle; Robinson, 1997, 2004b)	Other professions, just as worthy, do not enjoy a similar freedom and tenure (e.g., police officers, nurses, and other public officials), so why should the professoriate? (Allen, 1997; Chait, 2002; Shreker, 2000)
Progress needs an environment free of orthodoxies, censorships, and artificial barriers for creative thought to flourish (Bok, 1982; Shils, 1984/1997)	The professoriate occupies the ivory tower unconnected to the public they are supposed to serve. The professoriate are not fully accountable and responsible – too self-indulgent. (Magrath, 1997)
Allows safeguard to perform the kinds of jobs societies have bestowed on the professoriate (i.e., to speak truth to power; De George, 1997; Yankelovich, 2004)	There are already speech laws. Are they not enough?
Provides license to teach and research without necessarily having to only repeat the truisms of the past (De George, 1997)	Tenured faculty members act as ideologues trying to indoctrinate students (Wright, 2004)



### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how power is understood and expressed within the role of the professoriate by faculty members who have academic freedom. A research design that involved open-ended interviews was used to make sense of how power is exhibited in various aspects of the exercise of and sometimes the restriction of academic freedom.

It was framed around one central research question: How do professors with academic freedom make sense of their role within the institution and society? This question was explored through the following sub questions:

1. What do professors perceive as their primary role (or obligation) when they have academic freedom?
2. What rights and freedoms are embedded in the role of a professor with academic freedom?
3. What do professors perceive to be the limitations of their role despite having academic freedom?
4. What do professors perceive as the role of a public intellectual?

The answers to these questions explicate various issues associated with academic freedom: *freedom to* (do something), *freedom from* (certain restraints), and *ideally* what their role could be, respectively, for sub questions one to three. The fourth question attends to the direct societal expectation of the professoriate to speak truth to power and the faculty members' recognition of that expectation.

### **Conceptual Context**

Faculty members' work is understood to involve the creation, dissemination, and critique of knowledge. One of the constituents of the conceptual framework, therefore, was knowledge. Because the present-day social organization is enormously dependent on knowledge, people centrally involved in knowledge production, propagation, analysis, and evaluation are understood to be in positions of power. Power was the second constituent of the conceptual framework. Given the link between knowledge work and the shaping of public discourse, public intellectuals served as the third constituent of the conceptual framework.

The framework of public intellectuals, knowledge, and power elaborated on:

1. What, at present, do members understand their roles to entail?
2. How has this role evolved to the present?
3. What would be the ideal role of professors?

These three questions, which concern the present state, historical development, and the ideal possibility, constitute the three axes of what Max Weber (1922/1968) called *Verstehen*: understanding. Following Weber, this study aimed to explicate the understanding faculty members had of their role, the knowledge and power inherent in the role, and the nature of public intellectuals.

### **Outline of Chapters**

In this chapter, I have described the background, the rationale, the problem, and the purpose of the study. These elements explain and establish the contextual framework that served as the entry point into the study and were subsequently used to formulate the research questions.

In Chapter Two, I turn to background literature in the areas of public intellectual, knowledge, and power to make the case that public intellectuals necessarily deal with issues of knowledge. That is part of what faculty members did (and do) and situates them in positions of power. I offer different conceptions of power to situate the study.

In Chapter Three, I present the methodology and a rationale for using the lens of interpretive social science in this qualitative study. I explain data collection methods and procedures for data analysis, and I discuss the credibility of the work as well as its limitations.

In Chapter Four, I present the study findings. I describe the participants' accounts of their roles as tenured faculty members. I highlight their impressions on germane issues using their own words and phrases. In the second part of this chapter, I present the cross-case analysis of the data and the three themes derived from the data.

In Chapter Five, I outline the variations and similarities in the participants' descriptions and experiences. I offer some observations drawn from the literature and my cross-case reading of the interview transcripts. Finally, I discuss broad conclusions based on the study findings and outline the implications for practice, theory, and further research. I also include a postscript on how my own understandings have been shaped as a result of this study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays. Friedrich von Schiller (1794, letter 15)

To frame an exploration of academic freedom in the role of the professoriate, this chapter reviews the literature on the three pillars of public intellectuals, knowledge, and power. If academic freedom is the life-blood of the modern day university, then what is the relationship between academic freedom and academic tenure? De George (1997) offers that academic tenure is an institutional means of enacting academic freedom:

The main purpose of academic tenure is to prevent the possibility of a faculty member being dismissed because what he or she teaches, writes about is considered by either administrators or some people outside the institution to be wrong or offensive. (p. 10)

Although there are alternate means of securing academic freedom, tenure is a systemic assurance that academic freedom can be enacted. Given this protection, a related question is: What powers do faculty members have by virtue of having academic freedom? One answer is that academic freedom grants faculty members the powers to pursue what they wish and express it in forms they see fit, without censorship or undue restrictions. The content of tenured faculty members' pursuit could be termed *knowledge*, which constitutes one of the three pillars of this chapter.

A follow-up question concerns the purpose of making knowledge claims. The role of a public intellectual is to participate in the affairs of the polis in order to contribute to the areas of conduct and governance (in addition to knowledge). It is a powerful position with considerable responsibility. However, some critics (e.g., Chait, 1997, 2002;

Magrath, 1997; Shreker, 2000) charge that academic freedom has been invoked chiefly as a professor's right; therefore, there is an inherent tension between this "right" and the public "responsibility" that accompanies it. The right and responsibility to serve the public constitutes another pillar for the study.

Lastly, the people working in the knowledge domain and with the ability to influence social policies are assumed to be in powerful positions. How these powers are characterized and manifest is covered in the final pillar of this study: power.

### **Public Intellectuals**

Tenured faculty members are granted certain privileges within societies in order to carry out a specific role for the populace: to speak truth to power on behalf of those who do not have the skills, occasion, or podium from which to speak. This role is evident in the literature on public intellectuals that refers directly to faculty members in universities (e.g., Fallis, 2008; Gouldner, 1979; Jennings, 2002; Michael, 2000; Roepnack & Lewis, 1997; Said, 1993; Shils, 1972b; Shils, 1984/1997). Different interpretations, however, also signal confusion on how a faculty member is to discharge the expectations associated with public intellectuals. This section shows select interpretations of public intellectuals and the role of academic freedom. Of particular interest is the connection between rights and responsibilities as those two concepts are invoked in arguments for and against academic freedom.

When professors who are institutionally protected by tenure make controversial or unsavory knowledge claims, the power of their position becomes apparent. Such assertions are possible because academic freedom permits faculty members to pursue the research that they want and to make knowledge claims that are outcomes of those

investigations. Academic tenure protects their position in the universities when they engage in research endeavours that might otherwise be off-limits or forbidden. In return for this social privilege, faculty members are expected to contribute to the knowledge discourse within their field to influence policies and decisions within society. Roepnack and Lewis (2007) charge, however, that there are instances when “professors are not fulfilling the responsibilities of academic freedom or utilizing it as it should be” (p. 222). This raises a set of important questions: What are these faculty responsibilities to which Roepnack and Lewis are referring? What impediments, if any, lie in carrying out these responsibilities?

Edward Shils’s (1984/1997) treatise on *Academic Ethic* provides a possible answer to the question concerning faculty responsibilities. He says that the task of faculty members in universities is “methodical discovery and the teaching of truths about serious and important things” (Shils, 1984/1997, p. 3). The inherent assumption in Shils’s (1984/1997) assertion is that “truth has a value in itself, apart from any use to which it is put, [and it] is a postulate of the activities of the university” (p. 3). The idea of a search of/for truth that Shils (1984/1997) advocates is predicated on the assumption that truth is better than error, just as the medical profession accepts that health is better than illness, and the legal profession begins with the belief that the assurance of rights under the law is better than being at the mercy of arbitrary power. Shils’s (1984/1997) assumption permits the contingency and the transient nature of the truths in question. He writes,

The ascertainment of any truth is a difficult matter; the truth must be re-ascertained incessantly. These truths are changed continuously by new discoveries which may indeed be defined as the revision in the light of new observations and

analyses of propositions previously held to be true. For these reasons, there must be elements of tentativeness and readiness to revise in the attitudes towards any truths accepted at present. This readiness to revise is not tantamount to relativism. It does not mean that any proposition is just as true as any other proposition or that the truth of a proposition is dependent on the social position or political orientation of the person asserting or accepting it. It means that the propositions held at any moment are the best that could be achieved by the methods of observation and analysis which are acceptable in scientific and scholarly communities. (p. 4)

From this standpoint, the authority and legitimacy of the assertions may not always be a settled matter (Shils, 1972b). Faculty members, then, are charged with the responsibility to confront, refute, dispute, examine, and re-examine truth claims (new as well as previously accepted) within the present context and to share the results of their investigations without the fear of reprimand. After all,

A university teacher is, a member of an academic institution which is more than an administrative facility for his [sic] teaching and research: he is a member of a department and of the teaching staff of the university. He is also a member of the scientific and scholarly profession and of an intellectual community which runs beyond the boundaries of his department, his university, his profession, and his country. (Shils, 1984/1997, p. 8)

This proposition suggests that the obligation of the faculty member in the pursuit of truth claims or knowledge claims goes beyond the regulations imposed by the department, university, profession, or state. Indeed, in accordance with the *Declaration of Principles*

(AAUP, 1915) that is the basis of academic freedom and the *Policy Statement on Academic Freedom* (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2005), the responsibility of the faculty member is to the public at large.

If the truths to which Shils (1984/1997) refers are transient, contingent, and nonpermanent, their truthfulness must be reassessed repeatedly and periodically so as to ensure the legitimacy of those truths. One group of people on whom this responsibility falls are tenured university professors. They comprise the intellectual class. Elaborating on the responsibilities of intellectuals, Shils (1972a) identifies three primary roles: First, “the creation of patterns or symbols of general significance through the action of the imagination and the exercise of observational and rational powers and their precipitation into work” (p. 154). In this mode of knowledge creation, Shils (1972a) names imagination, rationalism, and empiricism as acceptable means as opposed to the acceptance of knowledge sanctioned by church in the middle ages. The second role of an intellectual is “the cultivation of the stocks of intellectual works” (Shils, 1972a, p. 154). This refers to the analysis and synthesis of other works, both contemporary and traditional. The third role is “the transmission through interpretation of the traditions of intellectual works to those who have not yet experienced them” (p. 154). This dissemination of intellectual work also includes teaching.

The three roles of intellectuals identified by Shils (1972a) align with professorial work of research and teaching in a broad sense. In practice, research entails the discovery of new truths and the critique of existing norms and prior knowledge claims. Similarly, teaching is the dissemination of the established truths in classrooms. Public appearances and research publications also fall under dissemination of knowledge.



Shils (1972a) grants that there could be variations in the manifestation of these roles in individual cases, owing to the nature of beliefs, categories of perception, and rules referring to the performance of the role. Moreover, the intellectual class could vary from society to society in composition and structure by size and the genres of work they produce. Their influence, too, could vary as a function of the “attitudes of the nonintellectual elites – political, economic, military – toward intellectual works, intellectual institutions, and intellectuals” (Shils, 1972a, p. 155). The precise details of each case are not as important as understanding that there are multiple factors that affect the nature of intellectuals, their work, and the expectations placed on them.

Michael (2000) asserts that there is profound confusion amongst intellectuals as to the nature of their intellectual work, its purpose, and the degree of influence they have:

Are intellectuals an empowered elite, or are they a vestigial organ of modernity with no function in a commodity-driven social order that no longer requires the regulative work of representation and legitimation that intellectuals once performed? Can progressive intellectuals speak for the oppressed, or does their intervention inevitably reproduce the silencing and marginalization of the oppressed for whom they purport to act? Can conservative intellectuals preserve the common grounds of a democratic social order, or can they only reproduce structures of privilege and exclusion? (p. 1)

The answers to the questions raised by Michael have resulted in classifying intellectuals into different categories. Boggs (1993) proposes two broad categories: *technological* (or *technocratic*) *intellectuals* and *critical intellectuals*. Technological intellectuals are a class of experts serving “to legitimate, in various ways, the smooth functioning of

bureaucratic state capitalism and other forms of industrial society. They are located primarily in the state bureaucracy, universities, corporations, the military, the media, and the culture industry” (Boggs, cited in Michael, 2000, p. 2). As experts, their authority depends on institutionalized power or professional credentials rather than public opinion.

Boggs (1993) identifies critical intellectuals as “evolving out of and against the [class of technicians,]... a critical intelligentsia situated in higher education, the media, ... but confined to local spheres of influence and therefore lacking the cohesion of technocrats” (cited in Michael, 2000, p. 3). These critical intellectuals function in “sectors of the public sphere where professional credentials and institutionalized power cannot completely protect them” (Michael, 2000, p. 3). Michael suggests that critical intellectuals address wider issues, not confined to their specialized fields of inquiry, and claim to speak for or to represent excluded, silenced, or oppressed groups in hopes of contributing to the creation of a more just society.

Historically, according to Boggs (1993) and Michael (2000), it is this critical intellectual that was synonymous with the term *intellectual*, but given the prevalence of and societies’ dependence on experts, the term intellectual has been employed for both kinds of intellectuals. This created confusion over the use of the term when it was used without the qualifying technocratic or critical adjective. Over time, Michael argues, the technocratic intellectual became synonymous with intellectual, and the idea of critical intellectual fell out of favour.

As early as the 1970s, Gouldner (1979) described the rise of the technocratic intellectual class as “elitist and self-seeking and uses its special knowledge to advance its

own interests and powers, and to control its work situation” (p. 7). Elaborating on the functions technological intellectuals offer to the powerful, Gouldner wrote,

The New Class [of technological intellectuals] may also be the best card that history has given us to play. The power of the New Class is growing... the power of this morally ambiguous New Class is on the ascendant and it holds a mortgage on at least *one* historical future. (p. 7)

The reason this power shift occurred was because the New Class that Gouldner identified was useful to the old status quo for the technical services it rendered to the powerful elite. These technological intellectuals proclaimed existing hierarchy as a “legitimate society as modern and scientific” (Gouldner, 1979, p. 12). From a power standpoint, the technical intellectuals lent their expert power to fulfill (explicitly or implicitly) the objectives of those already in powerful positions. Following that argument, the role of the technological intellectual was stripped of moral responsibility, and therefore, Jennings (2002) uses the term coined by Gitlin (1995) to refer to them as *pseudo-intellectuals*.

According to Michael (2000), “The authority and influence of critical intellectuals is in decline and the technologists have become ‘the predominant intellectual type in the modern period’” (p. 2). If that is the case, then a functional social void is created by the elimination or subjugation of critical intellectuals. Who, if not the professoriate, is going to fulfill the role of a critical intellectual? Within a given institutional context, the critical intellectual is frequently also an accredited technician in the social sciences or humanities. Yet, if a professor exclusively identifies with the role of technical intellectual rather than critical intellectual, he or she is likely to refrain from speaking truth to power when it might be inconvenient or hazardous to one’s own interests. In contrast, if

professors understand that their role is to perform the task of the critical intellectual, then this task takes on the added dimensions of moral responsibility, political battles, and social welfare.

Nine years after delivering his Reith lectures *The Representation of Intellectuals*, Edward Said (2002) pondered on the basic requirements for a critical intellectual to carry out his/her work. He concluded, more resolved than ever before, that the work of the intellectual cannot be nonpolitical. He posited that if one rises to an influential post, one is duty-bound to take on political battles in pursuit of noble ends.

Gitlin (1995) uses the Hindu term of high class “pundit” to describe technocratic intellectuals. He says, “Punditry is to intellectual life as fast food is to fine cuisine” (cited in Jennings, 2002, p. 110). A technological intellectual provides “pre-cooked opinions, endless talks, and rates performances rather than accessing arguments” (Jennings, 2002, p. 111). Both Gitlin and Jennings are suggesting that when one ignores the political and social implications of work, one absolves oneself from influencing or shaping how expertise is used.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2002) is an example of a researcher whose findings were re-engineered by Danish politicians to suit political needs. From this experience, he recognized the political and socially charged implications of his work. Consequently, he actively defended his findings and confronted the powerful elite in an attempt to prevent them from re-casting, re-interpreting, and re-visioning his work so as to meet the interests of the powerful. Additionally, he took to pen to disclose publically what was happening to truth and knowledge claims in the hands of the powerful. Said (2002) was urging precisely this sort of intervention by intellectuals, researchers, and professors.

Fallis (2008) echoed Said's (1993) sentiments and persuasively lobbied for the professorial role to be aligned with societal responsibility and political causes. Fallis wanted this responsibility to be made explicit in the form of social criticism. He granted that "not each professor must be a critic, but the university as a whole must accept the role" (p. 21) of social analysis, criticism, and amelioration. He argued that the danger of universities turning into hot beds of revolution was offset by the danger of universities acting as uncritical supporters of the powerful. The balance lay in aiming to be "neutral institutions" (Fallis, 2008, p. 21), which is surely an elusive balance. Therefore, Fallis concluded, "Great universities should be judged not just by the quality of their research, the learning of their students, and the contributions of their graduates, but also by the contributions of their professors to democratic society as public intellectuals" (p. 22), which is "to speak truth to power" (p. 21).

It is sometimes convenient to acquit oneself from carrying out the responsibilities of a critical intellectual and instead act like a technological intellectual, who is highly regarded and respected by everyone, especially those in power. The choice between the role of critical or technological intellectual, however imbalanced in favour of the latter, contributes to the tension, confusion, and consternation of professors. It makes the professorial job difficult. But no one suggested the responsibilities of being a professor were easy.

### **Knowledge**

The professorial role involves work in the knowledge industry, which entails creating new knowledge and passing this and established knowledge on to future generations. The institutional means to support this endeavor are universities. The

following brief history of universities and their connection to knowledge creation presents some key changes in mission concerning knowledge creation and propagation. It follows the example advocated by Michel Foucault (1977/1994) to trace the norms as they developed over time in regimes or systems of power relations. He wrote:

If power is properly speaking the way in which relations of forces are deployed and given concrete expression, rather than analysing it in terms of cession, contract or alienation, or functionally in terms of its maintenance of the relations of production, should we not analyse it primarily in terms of *struggle, conflict, and war?*... as they unfold. (Foucault, 1976/1980, p. 90)

To understand the connection between knowledge and power, I traced the history of knowledge development and key issues of the institutions in which academic freedom was born and struggles to survive.

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* begins with the statement, "All men [sic] by nature desire to know" (980a). The desire to know is so strong in human beings that they invented institutions to accomplish this natural objective. These institutions provide a systematic recording of how things were in a given era. These recordings can be used to interpret how things have been and to learn from it. The inherent assumption behind this enterprise is that no one can experience everything that can be experienced, and, therefore, recording events is essential. Yet, for moral and intellectual unity of a society (and even progress), some morals, ideals, principles are to be remembered and held in common among its community members. Every culture, society, and nation confronts the issues of documenting how things are in their times for the benefit of those to follow. Equally important is the task of interpreting that which preceded any era so as to draw from or

learn from the past. These activities require a high level of education, which, in turn, requires the existence of social organizations with teaching staff. The places where instruction happens may be palaces, schools, churches, privately or state conducted academies, or universities (Shils, 1972b). Shils (1972b) comments on the objectives of these institutions:

Through these, ordinary persons, in childhood, youth, or adulthood, enter into contact, however extensive, with those who are most familiar with the existing body of cultural values. By means of preaching, teaching, and writing, intellectuals infuse into sections of population which are intellectual neither by inner vocation nor by social role, a perceptiveness and an imagery which they would otherwise lack. (p. 5)

The scope of what is recorded is not limited to merely instrumental concerns; instead, it covers issues related to (a) problems of knowledge, (b) problems of conduct, and (c) problems of governance (Robinson, 2004b). It follows that cultural values, traditions, and attitudes are preserved as a result of instruction that happens at some of these institutions. In turn, the instruction shapes our worldview.

The authority and legitimacy of these sources of knowledge is not a settled issue. The disagreements, in part, arise from different traditions that people bring to the investigation of issues that concern them. Shils (1972b) identifies five such traditions: scientism (perhaps scientific is less pejorative), romantic, revolutionary, populist, and antiintellectual. The details of how they differ in their approach are not of concern here; rather, what is of relevance is the recognition that various traditions exist and are used by various scholars differently.

The differing modalities of each tradition used and the individualities of claimants give rise to disagreements over interpretations about things past and predictions for the future. This is not only inevitable but also desirable as it ensures that the knowledge claims are refined in the kilns of debate, disagreement, rhetoric, and testing. The advantage of such a configuration is two-fold: First, it creates a space for people working in these institutions (the professor-scholar) to engage in the contemplative life that Aristotle had in mind, that is, contemplation of the first and best things for its own sake. Second, the dictums that arise from such contemplations are applied to practical matters. Through these means, universities as places of study and contemplation are good for the individuals involved in the process as well as society at large.

According to Robinson (2004b), the foundations of the earliest universities in the Western world were laid by Charlemagne (768-814), who consolidated much of what are now France, Germany, and Italy into a single kingdom. One of his objectives was to bring diverse people in his kingdom together: “the Hellenic sense of *paideia*” (Robinson, 2004b, p. 125). In order to promote homogeneity, he proposed the use of Latin as an official language for property transactions, marriages, and other legal documents. Small abbey schools were established throughout the empire to instruct people to read and write this official language. In this he met a second objective, namely, to address the problem of illiteracy in his kingdom.

Over time, some of these abbey schools grew in size, in popularity, and in the range of subjects taught. Monasteries were also established near some of the popular abbey schools to provide clerical instruction in addition to bible study. At the great cathedral in Paris, the assembly of students was to constitute a *Universitas* (Latin



meaning *the whole or corporate body*), and the foundations of modern-day universities were laid. Robinson claims that universities were founded as the veritable social engines of self-perfection. With this claim, he supports Newman's (1852/1960) assertion of the larger purpose of universities within society, which is certainly more than to train youth to be employable.

The rational and creative energies that faculty and students employed in this self-perfecting endeavour were prone to take a skeptical turn in the direction of incredulity, ambiguity, confusion, and irresolution whilst attempting to resolve issues through systematic means. From that standpoint, the work carried out in a self-perfecting endeavour was (and is) arduous. Universities were (and are) capable of sustaining, supporting, promoting, and guiding introspection, critique, and improvement, which are some of the methods of self-perfection.

The ideas of serving society and helping to realize the best potential of a person, although seemingly straightforward, are substantially different from the assertions of John Henry Newman (later Cardinal Newman) in his famous treatise on liberal education delivered in 1852 in the form of 10 lectures entitled *The Idea of a University*. In them, he argued for the inclusion of religious (Christian) education at every level; second, he claimed that knowledge and its pursuit is an end in itself. The purpose of a university education was not to be immediately useful but to bear its fruits throughout life. He wrote,

A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what in a former

discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit... Knowledge is capable of being its own end. (1852/1960, pp. 76-77)

This idea of the pursuit of knowledge has its roots in Aristotelian times and is the basis of the founding of universities.

Rival institutions of knowledge have always existed. Even in ancient Greece, to rival Plato's Academy, there existed Sophist educational institutions that primarily focused on the teaching of rhetoric and, in this sense, practical concerns. Kerr (1963/2001) traces a brief history of some of these rivalries in *The Uses of the University*. Kerr's analysis reveals that Cardinal Newman's idea of the universities was a revolt against the scientific revolution initiated by Francis Bacon. Bacon condemned the medieval institution's idea of knowledge acquisition, which was mere memorization and reproduction of established or approved knowledge. Kerr writes,

[Bacon] condemned a kind of adoration of the mind... by means whereof men have withdrawn themselves too much from the contemplation of nature, and the observations of experience, and have tumbled up and down in their own reason and conceit. (p. 2)

With an increasing number of successes in sciences through innovation, invention, and development, university missions were changing after Francis Bacon's (1561-1626) era. Even as Newman (1852/1960) was compiling his work, the German model was the new paradigm for universities: "Science was beginning to take the place of moral philosophy, research the place of teaching" (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 3). Kerr draws the distinction this way: If British universities were seen as models for undergraduate education, then German universities were the models for research universities. The latter

were ideally suited for graduate studies. These trends did not displace or exclude the previously cherished values of universities. Instead, the new Germanic trait was additive. “The universities were becoming too many things” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 4), giving rise to the multiversity. The effect of this transformation was severe, and the purpose of universities was brought under dispute:

Several competing visions of true purpose, each relating to a different layer of history, a different web of forces, cause much of the malaise in the university communities of today. The university is so many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself. (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 7)

In sum, the role of universities enlarged to encompass teaching not only a liberal education consisting of enhancing the rational and moral nature of man but also any number of specialized subjects (Brubacher, 1965). These additional subjects eventually led to the enlargement of the mission of universities to include skill training.

The values espoused by Cardinal Newman (1852/1960) were what fell under general education and the basis of undergraduate studies. Specialized education, although on the same continuum, departed from generalizations in favour of subject specialization. Brubacher (1965) cautions, “When specialized education orients itself toward the particular rather than the general, a loss in moral quality occurs or a loss in educational value sets in” (p. 46) and in the process “exhausts itself on the particular” (p. 110). Luckily, the prescription of specialization was intended at the graduate level of education, and as a consequence, ethical components of the educational system were not lost at the

undergraduate level. However, this assertion is severely undermined as more and more specialized subjects are offered at the undergraduate level.

Newman's (1852/1960) and Robinson's (2004b) position on liberal education are similar perhaps because of the characteristics of medieval universities:

1. They had low student enrolments,
2. They had admission policies that favoured those who were independently wealthy and could afford the privileged lifestyle of indulging in ideas for their own sake,<sup>1</sup> and
3. They operated in relative isolation from the rest of the world.

Charting the development of English universities, Watson (2005) reports that changes were brought about by attacks mounted on the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, primarily by three Scotsmen (Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham, and Sydney Smith). Jeffrey and Brougham, the founders of *Edinburgh Review*, charged that the curriculum was too grounded in the classics and, as a result, largely useless. They wrote:

The bias given to men's minds is so strong that it is no uncommon thing to meet with Englishmen, whom, but for their grey hair and wrinkles, we might easily mistake for school-boys. Their talk is of Latin verses; and, it is quite clear, if men's ages are to be dated from the state of their mental progress, that such men are eighteen years of age and not a day older. (cited in Watson, 2005, p. 948)

Sydney Smith criticized "Oxbridge men for having no knowledge of the sciences, of economics, or politics... The classics cultivated the imagination but not the intellect" (cited in Watson, 2005, p. 948).

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<sup>1</sup> Only Anglicans were granted admission to such universities in England.

Watson (2005) reports that in part as a response to these kinds of attacks, University College and King's College in London were created, and nonconformists were allowed admission. The curricula were modelled after Scottish universities, which were chiefly concerned with practical matters owing to the influence of the Scottish common-sense movement. These deeply penetrating changes in the knowledge work of universities prompted Henry Newman (1852/1960) to compile his classical polemic piece that describes an ideal upon which universities should be based. In this way, the mission of universities had changed.

Since that time, the subjects in which a student could specialize have increased dramatically (and still continue to grow) with the menu of specialization including cooking, agriculture, astronomy, physics, and computer science, *inter alia*. Since no single student could specialize in more than a few of them, students chose their courses freely as per their inclinations. This represents “one aspect of *Lernfreiheit* [the freedom to learn] of the early nineteenth-century German university” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 11). Conversely, professors freely offered their wares based on their own inclinations and specializations – “as *Lehrfreiheit* [the freedom to teach], the other slogan of the developing German universities of a century and a half ago” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 11). According to Kerr, over the years, this autonomy to learn and teach came to serve faculty members more than it did the students. “The freedom for the students to choose became the freedom for the professor to invent; and the professor's love of specialization has become the student's hate of fragmentation” (Kerr, 1963/2001, p. 11).

These troubles notwithstanding, universities (or multiversities) became the site where the young were educated, new knowledge was created, and various subject

specializations were pursued. Understood in this manner, universities are not only places where students are imparted the basic skills, customs, traditions, and values of the past but are also sites where new knowledge is created. Policies, practices, and regulations developed to ensure that the needs and requirements of all parties concerned were appropriately met. The stipulations ensure that the students are educated in general as well as specialized ways, professors are able to pursue their area of study without undue restrictions, and society is served by having their young enculturated in the ways of the past and trained to carry out important social functions. One such regulation is academic freedom. It is intended to permit investigations and teaching without oppression and tyranny even when the cost of that pursuit might be criticism of established norms or examination of societies' undesired or taboo subjects. It is at the centre of Kerr's (1963/2001) argument that multiversities serve "society almost slavishly" but that these institutions are well within their mission to "criticize, sometimes mercilessly" (p. 14) the society they occupy.

The elevated prominence of universities within societies occurred because universities were attuned, responsive, and serving local needs. In different places, these university institutions were differently calibrated to meet local social needs and challenges. In turn, different mechanisms to award, preserve, and regulate academic work, including academic freedom, emerged. These mechanisms differ greatly, certainly at international but also at national, provincial, and regional levels (Joshi & Paivandi, 2014). These local differences imply that there is no singular or ideal conception of a university that exists or is implemented. Various instantiations of universities make it

impossible to refer to the university in generic terms. That is, they always exist within a context.

Within Canada, universities fall under provincial jurisdiction to fund and regulate; consequently, “there are ten provincial and three territorial systems” (Jones, 2014, p. 19). Despite these regional jurisdictions, a few key principles characterize Canadian university. Jones (1998) identifies five features of Canadian universities:

1. They are publicly funded institutions;
2. They are autonomous, insofar, as they oversee their own operation and hire their own workforce, including professors;
3. They have bicameral governance structure whereby academic matters are regulated by the senate (chiefly comprised of faculty members) and fiduciary accountability overseen by a public board (comprised of public members);
4. They are secular institutions, free from control of any denominational body; and
5. They are degree granting institutions. Although since the mid-1990s, other post-secondary institutions (like colleges) have also been licensed to grant degrees.

This constellation of features gives rise to the form of Canadian universities, which is the institutional body to which this study refers, unless otherwise specified. A key element of such a university is the authority and autonomy of the professoriate owing to the responsibilities they are expected to discharge.

With the freedom of protection against censorship and the liberty to pursue knowledge, university faculty members have become gatekeepers of knowledge, which is

inherently a power position. Contemporary sociology of knowledge is deeply concerned with power (e.g., Lamont & Wuthnow, 1990), and Foucault (1977/1994) is one of the most influential architects of the power-knowledge connection. Foucault's work on knowledge, write Swidler and Ardit (2008), can be understood as broadly composed of three ideas:

1. "Historical eras differ not only in what people think, but what is thinkable" (p. 186). Foucault (1973) wrote about changes in "epistemes" – not the mere differences in the classification of things but the logic used in the construction of these classifications. Different epistemes, in turn, escalate (or diminish) different characteristics. For example, the condensed history of universities and academic freedom within them demonstrates how rational modes of thinking and understanding the world and creation of knowledge supplanted the previously dominant episteme.
2. "Power is embodied in practices or techniques which have their own histories" (p. 186). Power is not separate and apart from traditional practices; instead, it is embedded in the practices themselves, which alter through time in such a way that power hierarchies remain intact. Rather than seeking causal links between forms of power and social formations of them, Foucault's work traces historical transformations in techniques of power. Within the changing context of universities and their mission, it means that professorial practices have changed over decades and centuries, but according to this Foucauldian dictum, power hierarchies have remained intact.



3. “Techniques of power are also, simultaneously, forms of knowledge” (p. 186).

Swidler and Arditi cite an example:

The monastic practice of confession made real corresponding forms of knowledge, such as varieties of sin or techniques for recognizing and recounting these, just as the ability of asylums to confine and segregate the mentally ill enact psychiatric knowledge of diagnosis and cure. (p. 186)

The knowledge of what was sinful (or insane) did not bring about the practices. It was the other way around – the practices (of what was sinful or who needed confining) produced “knowledge” in those realms.

Swidler and Arditi’s (2008) interpretation of Foucault’s work suggests that new forms of knowledge have the ability to create new sites where power can be applied and resisted. Consequently, if faculty members in post-secondary institutions are creators of knowledge, variously used and applied to societal affairs at large, they are in a powerful position. This leads to the discussion of the last pillar, power.

### **Power**

This discussion of power is divided into subsections. The first three subsections provide a brief analysis of the classical understandings of power and its symptoms. The fourth deals with power analysis as presented by Foucault (1977/1994). It makes explicit the underlying connections between the politics of truth claims and power’s influence on them, what Foucault (1977/1994) terms as “problem of the regime” (p. 114). The final subsection highlights work on sources of power and its expression within organizations and universities in particular.

Classically, power is understood to be a causal mechanism. This has led to the classical definition of power that concerns itself insofar as its application produces results: “A has power over *B* to the extent that [A] can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do” (Lukes, 1974/2005, pp. 11-12). To situate this definition, Fowler (2004) writes, “Power and education policy cannot be separated because ‘the play of power’ shapes the outcome of policy process” (p. 26). Lindblom (1968) explains that even at the policy development stage, it is through the play of power that decisions are made. For instance, persuasion, a technique commonly used in decision making, takes the form of “outright deceit and irrational and non-rational appeals of many kinds, including, at one extreme, organized propaganda and at the other, exploited ties of kinship and friendship” (Lindblom, 1974, p. 32), all of which are exercises of power.

Fowler (2004) identified various ways in which power has been conceptualized and practiced. She stresses that these distinctions and conceptualizations are descriptive rather than prescriptive: “Although the three dimensions of power, types of power and power resources are presented separately, real life is more complex than textbook models. In most social settings, all three dimensions operate simultaneously, and several types of power are used” (p. 30). Following that argument, power is played out in complex ways, but there are three dimensions of power as it is classically understood and applied.

### **First Dimension of Power**

In his influential work entitled, *Who Governs?* Dahl (1961) conceptualized power as exemplified in the political decision-making process in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. From this investigation, Dahl concluded that decisions are made, not by an ideal democratic process, but by the powerful elite who exert their influence explicitly.

This conclusion is an example of the first dimension of power. Three features surface prominently in this dimension. First, it is exercised explicitly. Fowler (2004) writes, “The first dimension of power consists of *explicit* exercise of power, which are often directly observable” (p. 30, emphasis added). Second, it is exercised in and through formal institutions. Pfeffer (1981) writes, “When power is so legitimate, it is denoted as authority” (p. 4) and forms the basis of the authoritative rights (e.g., faculty members with tenure). Furthermore, all parties involved recognize the use of power: those exercising it, those on the receiving end of application of power, and even those who are merely observing. Third, it is measured in outcomes of the decisions. Power’s effectiveness is measured on nothing short of obtaining the desired outcomes of the powerful elite. For instance, institutions, such as the church, judiciary, and higher education, are institutions where a power hierarchy exists, and these institutions hold a privileged (read powerful) position in societies.

Drawing on the works of Dahl (1961), Mann (1992), Robinson (1995), and Wrong (1979), Fowler (2004) identifies three major sources of power in the first dimension: material resources, social resources, and knowledge resources. Material resources include such commodities as time, money, energy, and control over careers. Social resources include things such as official position, personal impact, popularity, social status, access to money, the media, and the legal system. Knowledge resources include control over information, intelligence, and an understanding of how the systems work.

The first dimension of power can be seen to be operational in instances in which faculty members, owing to their position within society, provide advice on the subject

matter of their expertise. Another explicit use of power is evident when the powerful elite prevent a faculty member from offering input on a subject. The historic case of Frank Underhill demonstrates this phenomenon. Although such obvious restrictions of rights are infrequent, they still do occur. Dr. Nancy Olivieri's high profile case in 1993 (see Thompson, Baird, & Downie, 2005) is an example of the exercise of explicit power. In brief, Dr. Olivieri's research contract was terminated by the sponsor of the study (Apotex) and legal action threatened when she published her findings concerning the harmful effects of the drug Deferiprone.

### **Second Dimension of Power**

Bachrach and Baratz (1962) criticized Dahl's (1961) conception of power as being too one-dimensional and void of complexities and nuances. They proposed a more sophisticated conception of power that is known as the second dimension of power. It is characterized by the implicit use of power. In this dimension, few, if any, actors realize that power is being exercised. Unlike in the first dimension where agendas are dictated by the powerful, in this dimension, meaningful participation of certain groups is limited. As well, restriction of "issues that can be raised for debate through devices less obvious than agendas" are used (Fowler, 2004, p. 35) to preserve the status quo in favour of the powerful elite.

If the first dimension concerns itself with the explicit exercise of power, the second dimension has to do with the "mobilization of bias" (Fowler, 2004, p. 30). The operation of the second dimension of power is evident in marshalling norms, customs, organizational structures, procedures, rules of the game, social usage, and traditions. For example, external grant funding agencies could mobilize bias by approving only those

research projects that employ research methods that are acceptable at that time, thereby perpetuating existing biases. If only certain methodologies, techniques, and customs receive research funding, it limits what can be researched and what can be known. Aboriginal epistemologies, for instance, could be deemed as nonscientific and inappropriate if biases were invoked, and that would constitute exercise of the second dimension of power. Another related example includes practices within universities where faculty members insist on and instill in their pupils the use of traditional (mainstream) methods for conducting research, writing, and emulating.

The flip side of knowledge creation is knowledge consumption, and it too can be affected by bias. For instance, the knowledge of which disciplines are in demand and which are not can be used to favour or marginalize the departments, its faculty, and their work as a way of exercising the second dimension of power. At a more granular level, the second dimension of power can be exercised in knowledge consumption by privileging only certain epistemologies and favouring only select ways of knowing.

### **Third Dimension of Power**

The second dimension of power critiques and extends the behavioural nature of the first dimension of power, yet Lukes (1974/2005) contends that it does not go far enough. Lukes accuses the 2-D view of ignoring the institutional, systemic, and organizational exercise of power stemming not from individual wills or individual biases but from the bias of sociological or political structures. On this basis, Fowler (2004) contends that the third dimension of power deals with the “shaping of consciousness” (p. 30). Instead of taking the conflict-driven view of power as conceptualized and presented in the first two dimensions, the third dimension deals with the “most effective and

insidious use of power [which] need not involve conflict, at least not conflict between desires or preferences” (Goldman, 1977, p. 306). Fowler comments on its widespread effects:

All of us have been on the receiving end in this dimension of power, for all of us have undergone the far-reaching acculturation that is the main business of childhood. Several social institutions are especially important in shaping consciousness. The family is the most crucial, in part because people first learn language within it... The family also inculcates beliefs and values, and its patterns of interactions shape consciousness... Schools and religious organizations also play a major role in shaping the way people see the world. (p. 39)

These different sources, families, schools, language, and others, shape our consciousness, and Fowler calls them “communication processes, myths, and symbols” (p. 30).

In Goldman’s (1977) reading of Lukes (1974/2005), two salient points arise: (a) the first and second dimensions of power allow the influence of power to be exerted over individuals, whereas the three-dimensional model allows it to range over institutions and social structures as well and (b) whereas the first two views construe effects as intentional activity (although benign in the 2-D model), Lukes’s view (3-D model) permits it to be unintentional and unknowing.

Therefore, the deeply entrenched customs and traditions of the roles of professors, the roles of the administrative cadre within universities, and the roles of universities in relation to societies all operate simultaneously to shape the public’s desires and expectations of them. Any challenge to the status quo by way of exercise of academic freedom undermines the grand narrative constructed by existing power structures. Even

universities, to a great extent, help retain these structures and power dynamics. For example, certain practices concerning the education of students have remained relatively unchanged over centuries. An example cited by Markie (1994) in *A Professor's Duties* illustrates this point. He states that with all the changes that have occurred in universities, certain power relations have remained intact: professors for the most part retain and exercise the lion's share of the power in a classroom. They decide the curricula, assessment schemes, and support they choose to give students. In short, the individual autonomy of professors is without bound. These characteristics have withstood a lot of changes in educational institutions. Of course, one cannot ignore the developments that are slowly appearing, including restrictions imposed on the autonomy of professors' choice of curricula and assessment by various professional accrediting agencies and the emergence of various policies in universities. But this, too, is an exercise of power that falls under either the first or second dimension. Self-correction of these trends on the part of professors, according to Lukes's (1974/2005) and Fowler's (2004) categorization of power, will fall under the third dimension as it would be understood as an effort either to alter the embedded practice or the status quo or to influence entrenched teaching practices. In summary, power is an underlying enabler of making knowledge or truth claims and a powerful influence on what knowledge or truth claims can be made.

The three dimensions of power are theoretically separated into distinct categories to enhance understanding. In practice, invariably, they operate simultaneously and not exclusively. Deem's (2008) description of the advent of *new managerialism* in public service organizations in Western societies in the 1990s shows how different dimensions of power operate simultaneously. Deem's new managerialism is indicative of how

universities have changed in recent times and how their governance models affect professorial work.

Tracing the history of new managerialism, Deem (2008) writes,

The roots of new managerialism lay in the 1980s cuts in public expenditure, the introduction of quasi-markets to public services, and examination of the so-called producer-dominance of public service organizations, as part of a more general shift to neoliberalism in many Western societies. (pp. 257-258)

She warns that this new managerialism should not be confused with *new public management* because the two differ. Deem explains,

While new public management arose out of public choice theory and has become seen as a new technocratic orthodoxy for public-service organizations regardless of the dominant political ideology of the country concerned, new managerialism is much more unashamedly ideological when applied by policy makers, with the private sector seen as providing the efficient and effective organizational model that public services must emulate. (p. 258)

This is a clear example of how ideological positions are used to implement a private-sector ethos on publically run organizations, including universities. Deem implies that these operate openly as first dimension of power.

In contrast to the first dimension of power, the unquestioned underlying assumption indicates that other dimensions of power operate, too. Explicating new managerialism, Deem (2008) says, “New managerialism has permeated or been imposed on public services in a variety of ways, including public funding mechanism and policies, government reports and recommendations and the use of consultants with private-sector



experience” (p. 259). These trends have seeped into the psyche and are unquestioned, which indicates that this new managerialism operates on second and third dimensions of power.

The implications for universities because of the proliferation of new managerialism are stark. According to Deem, Hillyard, and Reed (2007),

Whilst academics are often now described as expert knowledge workers engaged in teaching and research, as part of the knowledge economy and the knowledge society, the typical organizational and management arrangements of universities and the challenges of higher education policy are seen by many critics to reflect neither trust and autonomy needed to undertake creative work nor the appropriate strategic direction required of a twenty-first century higher education institution.

(p. 67)

This signals a pronounced power shift from the professoriate to the administrative cadre. This connection of knowledge with power and its shift is explicated in the following section.

### **Power/Knowledge Nexus**

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) devoted his academic career to exploring the historical roots and developments of various social institutions, such as prisons, mental institutions, and educational systems, to understand how power operates within these social systems. Foucault (1977/1994) observed that after a period of time, certain “orders of knowledge” take off and hasten the evolution, thereby giving the impression of discontinuity or failing to “correspond to the calm, continuist image that is normally accredited” (p. 114). He explained,

It is not a change of content (refutation of old errors, recovery of old truths), nor is it a change of theoretical form (renewal of a paradigm, modification of systematic ensembles). It is a question of what *governs* statements, and the way in which they *govern* each other so as to constitute a set of propositions that are scientifically acceptable and, hence, capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures. (p. 114)

The changes that Foucault (1977/1994) describes permeate gradually and quite unnoticeably into the “conscience of us all” (p. 126). One way to examine these, therefore, is to conduct a historic exploration. For example, the brief history presented in the previous sections describe gradual changes in universities and the role of the professoriate.

Not all exercises of power that bring about change are repressive or oppressive. For instance, the defence of academic freedom is based just as much on the positive liberty, freedom *for* (see Roepnack & Lewis, 2007), as it is on negative liberty, freedom *from*. Foucault (1977/1994) resists the critics’ interpretation of his power analysis as entwined with repression. He explains,

It seems to me now that the notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power. In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with law which says no – power is taken, above all, as carrying a force of prohibition. Now, I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread. (p. 120)

Historically, power has been evoked most by conflict theorists, in which there is usually someone or some group who are thought to have power and to use it for some purpose. Foucault (1977/1994) brought an alternative view to study power dynamics. Foucault (1977/1994) acknowledged the good in power, too: “What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (p. 120). This is considered as Foucault’s (1977/1994) major contribution to the discussion of power.

The oppressing and liberating effects of power are inextricably entwined in the techniques that are employed in exercising and stimulating them. Concerning this relationship between power and the techniques used to bring it about, Foucault (1977/1994) writes,

As soon as one endeavours to detach power with its techniques and procedures from the form of law within which it has been theoretically confined up until now, one is driven to ask the basic question: Isn’t power simply a form of warlike domination? Shouldn’t one therefore conceive all problems of power in terms of relations of war? (pp. 123-124)

This does not mean that the descriptors and recollections of faculty members will be or need to be in war-like terms. Rather, the quote suggests that when (if) faculty members’ contributions (experiences) include stories of confrontation, opposition, or tension, they are getting at the issues of power germane in their professorial role. An element of dichotomy is evident in this argument. It is akin to asserting that how one would know that he/she is free is when said freedom is curtailed or impinged upon. Foucault’s

(1977/1994) use of a war and conflict metaphor does not identify the intent behind the practices or techniques of power which could, in fact, be quite benign. I quote Foucault (1980) at length here because he anticipates questions and furnishes appropriate examples to forward his position on the machinery of power and the intentions behind it:

Power is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws or a state apparatus.... Take the example of the division of labour in the great workshops of the eighteenth century: how could this separation of tasks have been attained without a new distribution of power on the plane of the management of the forces of production? Similarly with the modern army. New types of armament, new forms of recruitment were not sufficient: it was necessary to have at the same time this new distribution of power known as discipline, with its structures and hierarchies, its inspections, exercises and methods of training and conditioning.... It's obvious that in an apparatus like an army or a factory, or some other such type of institution, the system of power take a pyramidal form. Hence there is an apex. But even so, even in such simple case, this summit doesn't form the 'source' or 'principle' from which all power derives as though from a luminous focus.... The summit and the lower elements of the hierarchy stand in a relationship of mutual support and conditioning, a mutual 'hold' (power as a mutual and indefinite 'blackmail'). But if you ask me, 'Does this new technology of power take its historical origin from an identifiable individual or group of individuals who decide to implement it so as to further their interests or facilitate their utilisation of social body?' then I would say 'No'. These tactics were invented and organised from the starting points of local conditions and

particular needs. They took shape in a piecemeal fashion, prior to any class strategy designed to weld them into cast, coherent ensembles. (pp. 158-159)

Three central issues are highlighted:

1. Power is hard to tease out.
2. Power lurks behind the simplest and seemingly benign practices.
3. Power sustains itself by dispersing throughout the system rather than being retained at the apex of any hierarchical system, and then, by mutual interdependence, sustains itself.

These implications demand the close scrutiny of relations and practices of faculty members regarding their academic freedom.

In summary, the preceding discussion on power as it relates to this study highlights four points:

1. The exercise of power is omnipresent.
2. Forms of power are evident in the particular issues chosen for examination.
3. Language and metaphors used to discern the problem and seek various solutions give an indication of the issues at hand.
4. There is an explicit connection between power and knowledge.

These threads of connection between subject, knowledge, and power are abundantly evident in the case of Bent Flyvbjerg (1952 –), who contributed to improved ways of understanding how power is embedded in systems based on reflections of his own experience. Flyvbjerg was an intern working for the Regional Planning Authority with Ribe County Council in Denmark. His role was to conduct a survey of social, educational, and health services with the purpose of finding arguments for and against the

centralization or decentralization of these core services. Through extensive research, Flyvbjerg found strong evidence in support of decentralized services. He wrote his report and submitted it to his supervisor. Upon approval, it was passed on to the ministry, but Flyvbjerg later received comments back from the ministry with stipulations for amendments and alterations to the report so as to favour centralized models rather than the study's findings for decentralized ones. This experience continued to haunt Flyvbjerg although he could not articulate it at that time. Later, he went on to describe: "I had seen knowledge being marginalized by power, and power producing knowledge that served its purposes best" (Flyvbjerg, 2002, p. 122).

This event in Flyvbjerg's life brought him to study the "relationship between rationality and power, truth and politics" (Flyvbjerg, 2002, p. 122). Flyvbjerg's analysis led him to assert that enterprises based on an ethos of modernity, like planning research and educational systems, have a blind spot. The ideals to which these institutions strive have effects that "seem to block the view of reality" (p. 123). One of the central features of this ethos of modernity is captured in Francis Bacon's aphorism: *knowledge is power*. This is also at the heart of the purpose of academic freedom within the university institution, but the kind of knowledge that gets to be counted as powerful knowledge is never made explicit. Flyvbjerg argues that the party that can "put the greatest power behind its interpretation" (p. 138) determines the codes of engagement and decides the source and context of a valid knowledge base. Flyvbjerg posits,

While power produces rationality and rationality produces power, their relationship is asymmetrical. Power has a clear tendency to dominate rationality in the dynamic and overlapping relationship between the two. Paraphrasing

Pascal, one could say that power has a rationality that rationality does not know.

Rationality, on the other hand, does not have power that power does not know.

The result is an unequal relationship between the two. (p. 140)

In short, “illegitimate rationalization dominates rationality” (Flyvbjerg, 2002, p. 141).

Those rationalities (however suspect, inferior, or invalid for the context) that can invoke the most power determine the course of action. Following that claim, the connections between knowledge and power are irrefutable and, consequently, demand responsibility on the part of the actor making knowledge claims.

### **Sources of Power and Organizations**

In their classical work, *The Basis of Social Power*, French and Raven (1959/1993) identify major types of power so as to “compare them according to the changes they produce” (p. 303). They conceptualize power as a phenomenon comprised of two dyadic relationships between two agents, which can be viewed from “What determines the behavior of the agent who exerts power?” and “What determines the reactions of the recipient of this behavior?” (p. 303). They focus on the life space of the person upon whom the power is exerted or the recipient of the agentic actions of the powerful. French and Raven stress that their basis of power is meant to be descriptive so as to explicate power dynamics rather than prescriptive, authoritative, or etched in stone. They grant that in real life, power operates in more complex ways. For enhancing understanding, however, they identify five bases of power: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power.

**Reward power.** Reward power is the ability of one agent O to “administer positive valences and to remove or decrease negative valences” for another agent P (French & Raven, 1993, p. 308). The essential characteristics of this power are:

1. The strength of reward and its congruence with P’s expectation determine O’s power over P.
2. O’s power over P will increase over time if O succeeds in fulfilling the promises he/she made to P, in order to get P to do as desired (by O).
3. O’s promises for reward that lie outside the jurisdiction of what O can grant P will decrease O’s reward power over P in time.

**Coercive power.** Coercive power is similar to reward power in that it also involves an agent O’s ability to manipulate the attainment of valences. “Coercive power of O [over] P stems from the expectation on the part of P that he [sic] will be punished by O if he fails to conform to the influence attempt” (French & Raven, 1993, p. 309). The strength of coercive power is directly proportional to the negative consequences that O can bring about on P if P does not conform to O’s wishes/dictates; and “Coercive power leads to dependent change [and] the level of dependence varies with the level of observability of P’s conformity” (French & Raven, 1993, p. 309). In common parlance, sometimes referred to as the *group effect*, this type of power is evident when workers scapegoat their colleague if said colleague’s productivity is out of proportion to that of the rest of the group.

It is sometimes argued that reward and coercive powers are the same. French and Raven (1993) pose a set of questions: “Is the withdrawal of a reward really equivalent to a punishment? Is the withdrawal of punishment equivalent to a reward?” (p. 310). The



answer to these questions is dependent on how the agent P, on whom the power is exerted, perceives it. But the distinction between the two types of power is essential because they have a different dynamic. The exercise of either reward or coercive power alone is not sustainable. Although exclusive use of reward power will increase P's attraction to O, it will reduce O's effectiveness over P without the promise and delivery of reward; and overuse of coercive power is likely to make P remove himself/herself from the environment. Therefore, both of these powers must operate in tandem.

**Legitimate power.** French and Raven (1993) identify legitimate power as the most complex. A legitimate power derives its name from the term *legitimacy*, which is conceptually defined as “a valence in a region which is induced by some internalized norm or value...[that]... has some conceptual property as power, namely an ability to induce force fields” (K. Lewin, cited in French & Raven, 1993, p. 311). Values, akin to other forces, like “internalized norms, role prescriptions and expectations, or internalized pressures” have a feeling, inclination, or pull towards “*should, ought to, or [have] right to*” (p. 311). These values then direct one's action.

In similar fashion, “need also induces valences” (French & Raven, 1993, p. 311) or force fields. However, there is an important difference. French and Raven write:

When a need induces a valence in P, for example, when a need makes an object attractive to P, this attraction applies to P but not to other persons. When a value induces a valence, on the other hand, it not only sets up forces on P to engage in the activity but P may feel that all others ought to behave in the same way. (p. 311)

Legitimate power of O over P is defined as “that power which stems from internalized values in P which dictate that O has a legitimate right to influence P and that P has an obligation to accept this influence” (p. 311). This relationship need not only be based on authority. P might submit induction from O because P might have given his/her word to O and is unwilling to forfeit the agreement or commitment. The central criteria of legitimate power involve “some sort of code or standard, accepted by the individual, by virtue of which the external agent can assert his [/her] power” (p. 311).

French and Raven (1993) broadly identify three bases of legitimate power. First, legitimate power is culturally determined. In some cultures, authority and legitimacy are granted based on age, gender, or social hierarchy. Second, “Acceptance of social structure is another basis of legitimate power” (p. 312). In that case, if an agent P accepts the social structure of his/her group, organization, or society, and its hierarchy, then P will accept the legitimate authority of any other agent O who occupies a superior office in that hierarchy. It follows that the legitimacy is not based on psychological aspects of the persons involved, but the relationship between offices in the organization in question. The legitimate power involves the perception of P that the agent O has the right to hold the office. The third and final basis of legitimate power is designation by a legitimizing agent. “An influencer O may be seen as legitimate in prescribing behavior for P, because he[/she] has been granted such power by a legitimizing agent whom P accepts” (French & Raven, 1993, p. 312). For example, an election is a process of legitimizing a person’s right to an office that already has a legitimate range of powers associated with it.

French and Raven (1993) cite both formal and informal sources that grant legitimate power. A job description in a hierarchical institution is a formal source of

legitimate power of an agent O over P. Culture provides an informal source of legitimate power, and it is sometimes broad and ambiguous. The caste system of India, for example, legitimates the Brahmins' power to dictate the norms and behaviours of other castes. The attempt to use or exercise this power, if outside the range of (or not the basis of) legitimate power, decreases the overall power of the authority figure. Legitimate power is based on P's values, and, therefore, the source of the forces induced by O is based on his/her ability to activate them in P. Legitimate power also includes in its arsenal the ability/right to use reward and coercive powers.

**Referent power.** French and Raven (1993) base referent power of O over P in the "identification of P with O" (p. 313). The more P is attracted to O, the greater the identification and, hence, the greater the referent power of O over P. Identification within this context means "a feeling of oneness of P with O or a desire for such an identity" (p. 313).

Referent power is particularly hard to distinguish from other forms of power. French and Raven (1993) write,

If a member is attracted to a group and he [sic] conforms to its norms only because he fears ridicule or expulsion from the group for nonconformity, we would call this coercive power. On the other hand, if he conforms in order to obtain praise for conformity, it is a case of reward power. The basic criterion for distinguishing referent power from both coercive and reward power is the mediation of the punishment and the reward by O: to the extent that O mediates the sanctions (i.e., has means control over P) we are dealing with coercive and reward power; but to the extent that P avoids discomfort or gains satisfaction by

conformity based on identification, regardless of O's responses, we are dealing with referent power. (p. 314)

The difficulty of gleaning the motives of P's actions makes it extremely difficult to distinguish referent power from reward and coercive powers when the actions of P to conform are based on a respect for the collective wisdom of the group. "In fact, P is often not consciously aware of the referent power which O exerts over him[/her]" (p. 314).

**Expert power.** An agent O possesses expert power over P when: (a) O is more knowledgeable in the subject area than P (perhaps against some set standard), and (b) P perceives O to be more knowledgeable than P. Expert power need not be confined to members in the same group. Expert power is also called "informational power" (Deutsch & Gerard, cited in French & Raven, 1993, p. 315).

Expert power of an agent O exerts influence on P, only insofar as P accepts the validity of O's assertions. If power is defined in terms of primary changes (not secondary changes), it is the acceptance of the claim of the expert O that is acceptable as power. One must "distinguish between expert power based on the credibility of O and informational influence, which is based on characteristics of the stimulus, such as the logic of the argument or the 'self-evident facts'" (French & Raven, 1993, p. 315).

Two related phenomena accompany expert power: sleeper effects and halo effects. To explain the sleeper effect, imagine a scenario where an expert O presents facts, but he/she has negative referent power with P. Consequently, the facts or expert advice of O fails to influence P. Over time, the source of information fades; the negative effect of a referent power relationship between O and P diminishes, and the expert advice is accepted by P. When P is reminded that the source of information was O, the negative

referent relationship awakens, and the information is shelved. Therefore, the information/fact/expert advice is active only when the source of the information is forgotten, dormant, or sleeping, hence, the name *sleeper effect*.

The halo effect occurs when an agent O is considered to be significantly superior in one area and his/her powers (i.e., his/her influence) extend beyond the areas of his/her expertise. French and Raven (1993) report that the halo effect is sometimes shown to have a negative effect in that it undermines the confidence of the expert.

The framework proposed by French and Raven (1993), the classical conceptions of power, and Foucauldian interpretations of power yield a rich lexicon with which to examine power relations. To that lexicon, I add Kanter's (1979) identification of three lines of institutional power that operate separately and apart from individual powers: (a) lines of supply, (b) lines of information, and (c) lines of support (pp. 19-20). Kanter's analysis focuses on power in terms of how an agent in a position of authority engages power.

*Lines of supply* refer to the power of administrators to bring in the support needed in their organizational domain, such as materials, money, and resources, to use as rewards or as currency of prestige. In order to implement plans, administrators need to know as well as manage information. The strategic withholding and release of information is a mechanism to control the *lines of information*, be it formal or informal. The ability to mobilize support of the staff and other employees gives the administrator the *lines of support*. Together these three "lines" have the ability to neutralize and overshadow other powers that one might have in the organization (e.g., referent power and expert power).

Given the rich lexicon of power, the descriptions of cases concerning faculty members' roles in the academy will not be the same but rather will illuminate different aspects of power that undergird individual cases. If one were to extract the central element from the various descriptions of power and its lexicon, it is that the connection between knowledge and power is undeniable, and those in positions of creating, disseminating, or sifting knowledge (faculty members in the universities) are in powerful positions. Surely, this position comes with a host of rights and responsibilities.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I established that in modern-day universities faculty members transact in knowledge: its creation, its expression, its teaching, and its critique. This role awards them power in our knowledge-based society. How and to what ends are these powers utilized (or underutilized) by faculty members? Is the power inherent in the role of professors expressed, suppressed, traded, or given away? The answers to these questions, at least in part, lie in the faculty members' perceptions of their individual power, the powers that shape their role, and the powers inherent in the role of the professoriate at large.

Conscious understanding of the kinds of power one has, although not a guarantee of employing it, increases the chances of engaging these powers. The chance of engagement also increases when the purposes of the kinds of power are made evident. Discovering what faculty members understand to be the nature of their power by virtue of having academic freedom and tenure will elucidate the uses of that power and explicate their role as professors.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

Method is much, technique is much, but inspiration is even more.

(Benjamin Cardozo, 1931, p. 163)

The purpose of this study was to investigate how tenured faculty members understand and express power in their role as tenured professors. The focus is on their understanding of their role. Different paradigms within the social science tradition are available to investigate the understandings of participants in a study. Newman (2000) offers three distinct competing traditions used in social sciences: positivist, interpretive social sciences (ISS), and critical social science (CSS) traditions. All three traditions are empirical, systematic, and theoretical yet with important distinctions concerning their aims. The positivist tradition aims to discover natural causal laws, akin to what natural sciences aim for, in order to predict and control events. ISS aims to understand and describe meaningful social action. The *raison d'être* of the CSS tradition is to destroy myths and empower people to change societies. I have chosen to use ISS because its purpose aligns best with my intent to investigate the social understandings of tenured professors.

The positivist tradition views the nature of social reality as composed of stable preexisting patterns that can be discovered, whereas ISS assumes that the nature of reality is fluid, ever shifting, not merely reactive to external forces. ISS presumes that social reality is created by social interactions. CSS views social reality as conflict filled and governed by hidden underlying structures. In this study, I wanted to give tenured faculty members a voice in describing their professional roles and the power dynamics embedded within those roles as socially constructed through interactions among faculty, students,

administration, and policies, inter alia. From this perspective, the ISS tradition offers the most appropriate mechanism to describe these social interactions. In this chapter, I describe in detail the characteristics of this tradition and outline the research method used.

### **Interpretive Social Science**

The larger debate concerning academic freedom, academic tenure, and the purpose of universities at large contains little documentation of faculty members' voices concerning their own roles. This study aimed to give voice to the faculty members in that debate. This exploratory purpose is congruent with the aims and methods of the ISS tradition.

ISS has its roots in the work of German sociologist Max Weber and German philosopher William Dilthey. As opposed to general patterns that explicate all manner of behaviours, this tradition values personal reasons or motives that shape a person's internal feelings and guide his or her decisions to act in a particular way (Newman, 2000). In this tradition, the subjective element of interpreting reality is more important than reality as it might exist. In Kantian terms, phenomena are the appearances that constitute one's experience; noumena are the (presumed) things that constitute reality. It is the former (phenomena) that dictates an actor's interaction rather than the latter (noumena). On this basis, ISS assumes that it is an actor's perception and interaction with the world that influences one's actions, not the world that might exist outside the actor's perceptual and experiential realm. Therefore, this study sought to document tenured faculty members' understanding of their roles as they perceive them.



The understanding furnished through personal perception is related to Weber's (1922/1968) concept of *Verstehen* (deep understanding), which he describes as "the interpretive grasp of meaning," and is based on three contexts:

(a) as in the historical approach, the actually intended meaning for concrete individual action; (b) as in cases of sociological mass phenomena, the average of, or an approximation to, the actually intended meaning; or (c) the meaning appropriate to a scientifically formulated pure type (an ideal type) of the common phenomenon. (p. 9)

In this study, the historical context (a) describes how the role of the professoriate has evolved; the present context (b) investigates what faculty members understand their roles to be; and the ideal context (c) explores or questions what faculty members imagine to be the ideal role of a professor. These three contexts furnished a deeper understanding of the power dynamics associated with the roles of the professoriate.

Using the works of Berger and Luckmann (1967), Holstein and Gubrium (1994), Smart (1976), and others, Newman (2000) distilled the central characteristics of ISS. The eight organizing themes that Newman uses are described here to justify the choice of using ISS in this study.

### **Reason for Research**

An ISS researcher is chiefly concerned with enhancing understanding of the issue at hand and describing meaningful social interaction (Newman, 2000). This orientation is substantially different from the aims of positivists, who wish to discover natural predictive laws, and of critical theory researchers, who aim to smash the myths to alter social reality. Newman emphasizes, "Interpretive researchers study *meaningful social*

*action*, not just the external or observable behavior of people” (p. 71). This requires the researcher to take account of the “actor’s reasons and social context of action” (p. 71). In this study, the intention was to ask participants to articulate their understandings of their roles as professors and public intellectuals and not just be restricted to accept how their role has been scripted historically or contractually. The restrictions and the possibilities faculty members perceive regarding their role were as important as, if not more than, other considerations.

### **Nature of Social Reality**

The ISS tradition assumes the nature of reality as fluid, transient, and constantly redefined by the social interactions of the people involved rather than stable with pre-existing patterns to be discovered (as is the case with positivist views) or conflict filled (as is the case with critical social science). ISS regards reality as generative, evolving, and “based on people’s definitions of it” (Newman, 2000, p. 72). Reality is not a singular event or entity; it is redefined based on interactions agents have with it. Newman posits, “ISS assumes that multiple interpretations of human experience, or realities, are possible” (p. 72). For this study, this characteristic of reality demanded that not just a singular and definitive understanding of reality be accepted as the truth; instead, I accepted that multiple, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradicting realities coexist simultaneously.

### **Nature of Human Beings**

ISS assumes that human beings are “social beings who create meaning and who constantly make sense of their worlds” (Newman, 2000, p. 85). Positivists regard human beings as self-interested and rational individuals who are shaped by external forces, but

ISS requires that researchers pay attention to “What do people believe to be true? What do they hold to be relevant? How do they define what they are doing?” (Newman, 2000, p. 72). In ISS, the emphasis is placed on people’s own reasons for their actions: “The creation of meaning and the sense of reality is only what people think it is, and no set of meanings are better or superior to others” (Newman, 2000, p. 73). Following this assumption, the current study was committed to understanding the reasons why participants saw their roles to be as they did.

### **Role of Common Sense**

ISS allows for the recognition that “people use common sense all the time” (Newman, 2000, p. 73). In the positivist tradition, common sense is regarded as inferior to science. In ISS tradition, the truth value of common sense is uncertain, yet it is often used to accomplish things. Schutz (1967) called this the natural attitude. ISS accepts that neither common sense nor scientific laws have all the answers, yet both are employed in everyday lives. It follows that common sense “neither is inferior or superior to the other” (Newman, 2000, p. 73). Newman suggests that the ISS researcher must recognize that both common sense and scientific laws are important in their respective domains and that each is created in a different way for different purposes.

### **Theory Characteristics**

Interpretive social science theory describes and interprets how people conduct their daily lives. ISS “tells a story” (Newman, 2000, p. 73). ISS contains concepts and limited generalizations, but it does not dramatically depart from the experience and inner reality of the people being studied. Newman writes,

The interpretive approach is ideographic and inductive. *Ideographic* means the approach provides a symbolic representation or “thick” description of something else. An interpretive research report may read more like a novel or biography than like a mathematical proof. It is rich in detailed description and limited in abstraction. (p. 73)

The results generated in this study aspire to be authentic to the descriptions of and by the participants of this study; therefore, the reader is able to “feel for another’s social reality” (Newman, 2000, p. 73). I attempted to accomplish this by interrogating the meanings, values, interpretive schemes, and rules of conduct that faculty members employ in their daily workday lives. The use of lengthy participant quotes enables the reader to connect with participants’ understandings of realities. The ISS researcher must interweave generated findings and evidence into “a unified whole” where “the concepts and generalizations” of faculty members “are wedded in the context” of their lives (Newman, 2000, p. 74).

### **Authenticity of Explanations**

The theory generated by the ISS researcher is regarded valid “if it makes sense to those being studied and if it allows others to understand deeply or enter the reality of those being studied” (Newman, 2000, p. 74). Smart (1976) introduced the term postulate of adequacy, which applies here:

The postulate of adequacy asserts that if a scientific account of human action were to be presented to an individual actor as a script it must be understandable to that actor, translatable into action by the actor and furthermore comprehensible to his fellow actors in terms of a common sense interpretation of everyday life. (p. 100)

Smart's postulate of adequacy assumes that the interpretive researcher's description of another person's account is a "*secondary account*" (Newman, 2000, p. 74). Newman suggests that the ISS researcher is like a traveler, not a native, telling about a foreign land. Such an outside view never equals a primary account given by those being studied but "the closer it is to the native's primary account, the better" (p. 74). Consequently, the truthfulness of concluding descriptions is best assessed by the faculty members themselves. The findings must ring true to them. Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) employed in the study sought to meet this criterion.

### **Good Evidence**

In the positivist orientation, observability, precision, and objectivity are the hallmarks of good research. By contrast, ISS values "the unique features of specific contexts and meanings as essential to understand social meaning" (Newman, 2000, p. 74). Weber (1922/1968) writes, "Empathetic or appreciative accuracy is attained when, through sympathetic participation, we can adequately grasp the emotional context in which the action took place" (p. 5). Under this assumption, the findings obtained in ISS depend not on objective criteria as are required in positivist research but by laying emphasis on the particularities of the participants being studied. ISS sees "facts as fluid and embedded within a meaning system in the interpretive approach; they are not impartial, objective, and neutral" (Newman, 2000, p. 74). It follows that the ISS researcher employs a technique called *bracketing*, which Solomon (2000) explains is a phenomenological reduction derived from Greek *epoche* meaning suspension (p. 97). Newman interprets it as "a mental exercise in which the researcher identifies then sets aside taken-for-granted assumptions used in a social scene" (p. 75). In an actor's

experience and description of the world, the researcher suspends the causal relations and probes into the actor's meaning.

The technique of bracketing allows for revealing “what everyone knows” (Newman, 2000, p. 75). For example, when a faculty member referred to work responsibilities circumscribed by the collective agreement, what was not said was how the work was divided into various components. Applying bracketing meant probing with supplementary questions of what the faculty member meant rather than the assumed general rules of division of responsibilities.

### **Place of Values**

Values are considered an integral part of social life in ISS, and “no group's values are wrong, only different” (Newman, 2000, p. 85). This study aimed to be descriptive rather than looking for universal rules or a universalizing principle. The main objective was to understand what faculty members understood as their role and how power was embedded in that role. Given the complex, at times conflicting, role of values in power dynamics, ISS was the best choice for this study. The question that then surfaced was how best to employ ISS to achieve trustworthy answers to my research questions.

### **Selection of Site and Participants**

Since higher education is a provincial domain within Canada, the context of the role of the professoriate is comparatively uniform within a province. Universities within a province are subject to the same overarching provincial policies concerning higher education. However, within a province, idiosyncrasies and other variations owing to differences in size, location, age of the institution, and offerings within the universities are numerous. To get a sense of the role of the professoriate that is not solely dependent

on the particularities of one university, I sought participants from two universities within Ontario – one university enroute to becoming a comprehensive university and the other a large, recognized, research-based university.

Within universities, an understanding of the role of professors varies depending on individual members' affiliations to various faculties. For instance, how a faculty member in the natural sciences perceives his or her role might differ considerably from how faculty members in humanities construe their role. Consequently, the selection of participants was not limited to any one faculty. Instead, I solicited widely across various faculties within the two universities so as to get sufficient variety in understanding the role of professors.

Newman (1862/1960), Robinson (1997, 2004b), Shreker (2007), and Turk (2007) posit that the chief purpose of universities is to offer education for its own sake and not merely as a means to an end. Certain faculties, like social sciences, humanities, and sciences, are consistent with this mission. Other faculties, such as law, medicine, business, and education, are regarded as professional schools with more utilitarian objectives. The differences owing to discipline are also highlighted in the works of Beacher and Trowler (2001). These distinctions, whether real or imagined or rigid or permeable, are observed through different sets of policies; differences in availability of resources, funding, objectives, and measures of success; and different attitudes across distinct faculties. Following ISS assumptions, these differences have an effect on how faculty members perceive their roles in the different faculties. Instead of accounting for the variance owing to the affiliation of faculty members to these categories or faculties, I

excluded faculty members who were affiliated with professional schools or disciplines such as education, business, and medicine.

I also excluded those faculty members who were not yet tenured because nontenured faculty members might impose restraints on themselves so as not to harm their chances of securing tenure. Faculty members in Ontario universities who are not tenured have academic freedom in principle, but they might not have academic freedom in practice. Put alternatively, their role is not fully realized, and, hence, it made sense to exclude nontenured faculty. Creswell (2008) terms this technique as “purposeful sampling” (p. 214) and describes it as the intentional selection of individuals and sites to learn or understand central phenomena. Since the intent of the study was to investigate typical understandings of the role of tenured professors within the professoriate, it was “typical sampling” (Creswell, 2008, p. 216) that I used.

Seidman (1991) offered two criteria for enough participants. These were sufficiency and saturation of information. In order to attain a sufficiently inclusive and broad understanding of the professorial role, the number of participants would depend on new ideas or issues they generated. Seidman suggests that it is hard to predict that number in advance, but in consultation with my supervisor, we settled on 12 participants: six each from two sites. After numerous attempts to recruit participants, I obtained commitment from 11 participants, but two of the 11 participants withdrew from the study midstream; therefore, nine participant responses contributed to the study findings. Data saturation was reached when the responses to the questions from the interview guide (Questions 2, 5, 7, and 9 in Appendix A) yielded no new conceptual or thematic



categories, just different personal experiences. Therefore, the sample was considered to be sufficient.

I had hoped that the participant pool would equally represent both sexes, but only two of the nine participants were female. As a result, there will be no attempt to draw any binding or differentiating conclusions based on gender differences.

### **Research Procedure**

To explicate tenured faculty members' understandings of their roles and the power configurations within the professoriate as perceived by them, I used two data sources. Participant interviews served as the primary data source, and my research journal was used as a secondary source.

### **Participant Interviews**

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee (2006) states that interpretive research is context specific and "the researcher's priority is to understand *that* social setting involving *those* people at *this* time" (p. 11). I used one-to-one semi structured interviews to provide a space for my participants to describe their experiences and realities at the time of data collection.

Fontana and Frey (2000) describe interviewing as "the desire to *understand* rather than to *explain*" (p. 654) issues at hand. To frame the concept of understanding, I drew on Weber's (1922/1968) articulation of the three contexts that are necessary in unearthing understanding: (a) How are things now? (b) How did we get here? and (c) What could the ideal role be? To develop the content questions for the interview, I drew on the literature review of how power is understood and expressed in the role of the professoriate. The three themes of knowledge, power, and professors as public intellectuals, which had

emerged from the literature review, were integrated into the interview guide (see Table 2).

The interview questions were refined based on a pilot interview with one tenured faculty member, whose responses were not included in the data set for subsequent analysis. This process allowed me to make wording changes to the interview questions so as to clarify the intended meaning. The interview guide used to collect study data is provided in Appendix A.

Following Research Ethics Board (REB) clearance (File number: 08-369), potential participants were invited to take part in the study by way of an information letter. For solicitation, I approached the faculty unions in two universities in Ontario to send out the information letter to their members. I hoped to recruit 12 participants: six each from both sites. Data saturation was reached after in-depth interviews with three participants. From the fourth participant, the issues started repeating, although different personal experiences of the participants furnished new details. In the end, data from nine participants across two sites constituted the database for the study.

All participants were invited to participate in two recorded, semi-structured interviews of approximately 90 minutes each. The revised interview guide was the starting point for the first interviews. I sent the interview questions to all participants prior to our scheduled meeting but after they had agreed to participate in the study. This helped to ensure that my participants were comfortable with the questions and to give them time to think of their responses.

Table 2

*Interview Instrument Design*

Category	Probes	Question
Introductory		1. Please describe your current post, length of service, area of expertise, and your present research.
Descriptive		2. Describe your role as a professor.
	a. What is academic tenure meant to do?	3. (a) Why is tenure awarded? (b) Is this standard across universities, departments, or particular to yours?
Contextual		4. What has academic tenure allowed you to do?
	a. What is the purpose of these powers?	5. What power does academic tenure provide you?
	b. How are these powers expressed?	
	c. What effect did tenure have on your own research, teaching, and service?	6. How have your practices changed since receiving tenure?
	a. Distinguish between overt and covert threats.	7. (a) What are the threats to academic freedom, and what are the sources of threat? (b) How do these threats shape the role of the modern day professoriate?
	b. Are these threats perceived due to individual biases/dispositions, or are these systemic?	8. Describe any pressures you may have encountered concerning suppression of academic freedom.
Analytic		9. (a) In what ways might the tenured position of an academic be considered privileged?

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What do you think society expects of professors?</li> <li>b. What societal obligations are fulfilled when professors have tenure?</li> <li>c. Does this responsibility extend toward self, institution, discipline, society, or some combination of the above? How is it determined?</li> </ul>	<p>(b) On the flip side, are their obligations that go with the position as well?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe for distinction between technocratic and critical intellectual.</li> <li>b. How?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Professors are content experts in their respective fields. Who should have the responsibility to make sure their content expertise is used responsibly?</li> <li>11. What would the role of professor be if it were free of internal and external restraints?</li> <li>12. What does the term public intellectual mean to you?</li> </ul>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Why did you choose to participate in this study?</li> <li>14. Is there anything else that you would like to share for me to better understand your role as a professor, or professors' role in general?</li> </ul>

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The second interview served two functions. First, it acted as a member check (Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) where participants commented on, clarified, or corrected any of the information in the first interview transcript. Second, it provided me the opportunity to ask additional questions that arose during transcription or to follow-up on pertinent issues raised during the first interview. Only five participants participated in the second interview; however, I was able to secure member-checked transcripts from all nine participants and was able to get written clarifications on my remarks in the transcripts.

### **Research Journal**

Field notes were taken during the interview, after each interview, during the transcription process, and throughout the analysis stages. Gay and Airasian (2003) differentiate between descriptive and reflective field notes as emic (observed) and etic (interpreted) data and suggest that they be noted separately. Emic data, such as behaviours and facial expressions that could not be caught on recordings, were written during and immediately following each interview. Etic data comprised my thoughts while transcribing the recordings and organizing my ideas as I coded the resulting transcripts.

It is impossible and even undesirable for the researcher to remain objective and distant. By recording emic (observed) data and etic (interpreted) data separately, the research study gains credibility. These journal entries also served as a well-spring of probing questions for the second interview with the participants.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Analyzing qualitative data requires “understanding how to make sense of text... so that you can form answers to your research questions” (Creswell, 2008, p. 243).

Creswell identified several major steps typically used to analyze qualitative data.

Although these are described linearly, some of the steps happen simultaneously and some are repeated. The key aspect of qualitative analysis is that it is inductive in form: “from the particular or the detailed data to the general codes” (Creswell, 2008, p. 244). Given that the context and specificity is part of the data collected, “there is no single, accepted approach to analyzing qualitative data” (Creswell, 2008, p. 245); however, there are several guidelines that exist (Creswell, 2008; Dey, 1993). The key components that guide qualitative data analysis are discussed in the remainder of this section.

### **Data Organization**

Data organization is important for two reasons (Creswell, 2008; Dey, 1993; Gay & Airasian, 2003): to prevent loss of data and to aid in preliminary analysis. The process of organizing data can be achieved either manually or with the aid of a computer. I chose to organize manually due to the manageable number of participants.

First, I transcribed the interviews verbatim and included the emic (observed) data that I had recorded in my research journal. Any questions and issues that arose while transcribing and through preliminary reading of the interviews were inserted in a separate column at appropriate locations in the transcript. I read the transcripts numerous times to familiarize myself with the data. I then reread the transcripts as I listened to the recordings of the interviews. At this stage, I started to make notes that eventually led to the codes for analysis.

I manually kept track of codes and associated quotes from each participant. The strategy allowed me “to be close to the data and have a hands-on feel for it, without the intrusion of a machine” (Creswell, 2008, p. 247). This also permitted me to closely

inspect “every word and sentence to capture specific quotes or meanings of passages” and to experiment with various analysis schemes (Creswell, 2008, p. 248). Consistent with the recommendations of Creswell, I organized data into pre-existing categories obtained from the literature review (public intellectuals, power, and knowledge).

### **Data Coding**

The first step in data analysis is to obtain a “general sense of the data, mulling ideas, thinking about the organization of the data,” and considering whether more data are needed (Creswell, 2008, p. 250). To do this, I read the data multiple times to get a sense of the whole before breaking it down into parts. At this stage, each participant interview was treated as a single unit. That is, the coding was applied to each case separately, which Creswell labels within-case analysis. This descriptive data are presented in the first section of Chapter Four when each participant is described.

Then coding began. Creswell (2008) defines coding as “the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data” (p. 251). Coding is used to make sense out of text data, by dividing it into text segments, labelling the segments with codes, examining the codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapsing these codes into broad themes. In effect, this is “an inductive process of narrowing data into a few themes” (Creswell, 2008, p. 251).

Following Creswell (2008) and Tesch (1990), I identified and categorized themes and relationships within each transcript. As the codes emerged, they were applied to subsequent interview transcripts. This process continued until no more new codes emerged, which also indicated that data saturation had been reached. I then re-coded all the interview transcripts with the complete set of emergent codes. After all the interviews

were analyzed individually, these codes were categorized and collapsed into larger themes.

### **Describing and Developing Themes from the Data**

When all the interview transcripts were coded, the granularity of analysis changed from within-case to cross-case. The codes from one transcript were applied across other interview transcripts. In this way, the codes were amalgamated into a few key themes or categories. These themes then answered the research questions of the study. In this study, the strategy employed in moving from codes to theme was governed by the principles of interpretive social science tradition through a gradual move from the general sense (descriptive) of the participants to how the research questions could be answered (layered themes).

Creswell (2008) informs, “Because description is a detailed rendering of people, places or events in a setting in qualitative research, it is easiest to start the analysis after the initial reading of the data” (p. 254). Themes, on the other hand, are aggregated codes “to form a major idea in the database; they form a core element in qualitative data analysis” (Creswell, 2008, p. 256). Since themes represent the analytic move from data to answering research questions, there are many kinds of themes. Creswell identifies four major categories: (a) ordinary themes – themes that the researcher expects to find; (b) unexpected themes – themes that are surprises and not expected to surface during study; (c) hard-to-classify themes – themes that contain ideas that do not easily fit into one theme or that overlap with several themes; and (d) minor and major themes – themes that represent the major ideas and the minor, secondary ideas in a database (p. 257). I attended to all these categories through the analysis process.



The ordinary themes were related to the professorial role because, through the research design and interview instrument, I had intentionally set out to find it. The unexpected theme of governance issues that affected the nature of university was a surprise. I had assumed that the idea of self-governance was well-ensconced within the public university system in Ontario; therefore, administrators would be seen as peers, attuned to and sympathetic to the concerns of faculty members. However, the data revealed that a gulf formed once peers moved to administrative positions.

The amalgamated theme of professorial power was a hard-to-classify theme because participants spoke about power both as actors who exerted power and as subjects who received the exercise of power. Furthermore, issues of power were evident in examples shared by participants even if they were not able to identify it directly.

### **Layering Themes**

This is an advanced qualitative analysis step that builds on the idea of major and minor themes “but organizes the themes into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones” (Creswell, 2008, p. 259). Layering the analysis is also called “first- and second-order abstractions” (Creswell, 2008, p. 259). In this step, minor themes are subsumed within major themes and major themes are included within broader themes. The abstract or layered themes that emerged from the analysis were: (a) professorial identity, (b) professorial power, and (c) professorial silencing. The results associated with these themes are presented in Chapter Four.

### **Establishing Credibility**

This study aimed to explore an abstract idea of power that underlies various professorial actions and employed the analysis strategies described here. However, with

multilevel abstraction and interpretation leading to the findings, the credibility of assertions was a consideration. For the qualitative research to be credible and to ensure that the findings and interpretations of the research were valid, I used the following strategies.

### **Grounding of Research Questions**

In devising the interview instrument, I posed questions to the research participants that were grounded in the literature base. Additionally, Weber's (1922/1968) idea of *verstehen* (understanding) was used to gain input from the participants about what the role of the professoriate is and what it ideally could be. The historical context was furnished from the literature review. The grounding of research questions in a theoretical base ensured that appropriate questions were asked to answer the research question (David & Sutton, 2004).

### **Multiple Data Sources**

Qualitative inquirers often draw from multiple data sources to enhance the trustworthiness of a study (Creswell, 2008). In this study, I relied on interview transcripts and my research journal as data sources. These two data sources allowed for noting congruencies between transcripts and research journal. Additionally, by using two sites and faculty members from different faculties (sciences, humanities, and social sciences), I enhanced the credibility of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **Transcription Credibility**

Consistent with the recommendations of Tilley and Powick (2002), I transcribed the recorded interviews myself. This decision helped to ensure that while moving from the audio recordings to transcripts, nonverbal details like pauses, hesitations, and tone

inflections were not omitted. The hesitations, for instance, signaled contemplation on part of the participant and allowed me to pose follow-up questions in the second interview. Conversely, lack of hesitation on a question on power, for instance, signaled a perceived reality of the participant, which also allowed me to inquire into additional details. In other words, the nonverbal clues proved important in conveying unspoken sentiments. Upon completion of the transcription, I checked the transcribed text against the recorded audio.

### **Member Checking**

Member checking in qualitative research was introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a means to ensure that the researcher did not misinterpret or misread participant's responses. Creswell (2008) defines member checking as "a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (p. 267). Following that advice, I gave each participant his or her interview transcript along with a preliminary summary of my interpretations of the interview to be reviewed for accuracy and to make sure each participant's sentiments had been accurately represented. Furthermore, questions and issues that arose during transcribing and the preliminary reading of the transcript were inserted into the original transcript at the place where they arose. In a column adjacent to the remarks recorded, I added my own questions or comments, so that the participant could see the context within which the questions arose. Several participants mentioned that they appreciated this strategy and would use this method in their own research studies.

### **External Audit**

This is a process of recruiting an individual or individuals to review different aspects of the research (Creswell, 2008). I had my supervisor review and provide

necessary input at various key stages in order to aid validity of the process and of the conclusions I drew from it. The nature of advice sought included elements suggested by Schwandt and Helpert (1988, cited in Creswell, 2008): (a) Are the findings grounded in data? (b) Are inferences logical? (c) Are the themes appropriate? and (d) What is the degree of researcher bias? In addition, I had an experienced researcher, outside of my advising committee, periodically read my interpretations in order to check that these criteria were met.

### **Giving Voice**

By using participants' own words in the final document, I provided the much needed (and absent) voice of faculty members to the debate concerning professorial role and the power embedded therein. Including participant quotes also permits the reader to draw conclusions regarding the trustworthiness of the interpretations I made (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). In this way, the research can be assumed as authentic and supported by good evidence, which are desired characteristics of ISS (Newman, 2000).

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Volumes of books, academic articles, and passionate polemic essays have been written on the merits of and problems with academic freedom. These debates have shaped the discourse on academic freedom today. However, most, if not all, of these positions are either based on high-profile cases of academic freedom or on theoretical positions. This study aimed to contribute to the knowledge base by way of examining faculty members' understandings of their role, not when they are in the thicket of academic freedom disputes but on an everyday basis. I assumed that faculty members who are not

mired in academic freedom disputes can still articulate their understandings of their roles although they might not have given extended thought to the subject.

Another assumption is that faculty members' understandings their roles guides their practices. The study assumed that there is some congruence between what faculty members articulate their role to be and their actions as professors. Whether such is the case or not was outside the scope of this study and was not examined.

I also assumed that by discussing academic freedom and tenure, I would be able to get at the underlying issue at hand, which is power. Sometimes it was easy to do, and sometimes it was not.

### **Limitations**

In the planning stages of the study, it was assumed that there would be equal number of participants from two sites (six each). However, despite numerous attempts to solicit participation from tenured faculty members, in the end, only two faculty members at one of the sites participated in the study. Furthermore, both of these participants declined the follow-up second interview. This rendered an across-site comparison impossible. One of the two participants from this site was affiliated with an applied discipline and his understandings, in keeping with the assumption of the study, were significantly different from others.

This study represents the experiences and understandings of my participants only. There was never the intention to draw sweeping generalizations from the data. Rather, the purpose was to initiate a much-needed conversation and to offer voices that have been absent from the discourse around the professorial role, powers therein, and the role of academic freedom and academic tenure in general.

To contribute to the larger debate, other voices can be invited into the conversation. These include, but are not limited to, untenured faculty members who comprise a large portion of postsecondary educators, graduate students, faculty members from professional schools, and faculty members from other universities within the province, country, and elsewhere. Similar perspectives from the administrative cadre, too (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans, and Vice Presidents), can add to the debate. Stakeholders from outside universities, like funding agencies, the public, businesses, and politicians, have contributions to make to reveal nuanced and subtle power circuits, dynamics, challenges, and possibilities concerning the professorial role. However, the faculty members who are most affected by this debate need to have the central voice, and this research study invited their input alone. In order not to drown out the lead voice, the focus for this study remained the contribution of tenured faculty members.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study relies on contributions from participants. Their words, sentiments, and intentions need to be treated with respect and due honour (Creswell, 2008; Gay & Airasian, 2003; Tilley, 1998). This study followed the guidelines for research with human participants as articulated and overseen by the Brock University Research Ethics Review Board (REB clearance, File number: 08-369). I employed three strategies to ensure adherence with the regulations: informed consent, right to withdraw or refrain from answering without penalty, and confidentiality.

### **Informed Consent**

All potential participants were invited to participate in the study by way of an information letter, in which the expectations of the participants were clearly laid out.

After expressing interest in the study, the potential participant was sent the questions (Appendix A) in addition to the details of their expectation of time.

### **Right to Withdraw or Not Answer a Question Without Penalty**

The participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research study at any point in the information letter sent at the time of recruiting participants, and they were informed of their right again before the interview. Two participants chose to exercise this right and withdrew from the study mid-stream. The data collected from them were omitted from the analysis and write up.

Sometimes, however, participants in one-on-one interview sessions shared information that was off the record. This information was not used in the analysis, but it had the potential of influencing the researcher (me) with their response and disclosure. Likewise, during the member checking process, if participants struck something from the transcript, that section was not used in the analysis.

### **Confidentiality**

The names of universities and all the participants were omitted or changed to ensure, inasmuch as possible, confidentiality. I am the only one privy to the actual names of participants, other than the individual participants themselves.

### **Chapter Summary**

I have outlined the use of the ISS framework for the study and how it applies. I have also described the use of interviews for data collection and the inductive analysis of the interview transcripts for themes and categories. I highlighted the importance of narrating the stories of participants so that they ring true to the members of the professoriate. Finally, I outlined methodological assumptions and challenges and the

measures I took to make the results as authentic as possible without compromising participant confidentiality. In the following chapter, I present the findings from the study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.

Maya Angelou (1969)

The research questions guiding this study were focused on tenured faculty members' perceptions of their role in the academy as professors and in society as public intellectuals. Rather than seeking a comprehensive or definitive account of the professorial role, I wanted to engage participants in conversations about their perceptions and understandings of their roles as tenured faculty members. The entry point into this investigation was informed by the concept of *verstehen* (Weber, 1992/1968), which asks how things are, how they got here, and what the ideal form would be. This deep understanding was explored through the following sub questions, which helped create the interview guide:

1. What do professors perceive as their primary role (or obligation) when they have academic freedom?
2. What rights and freedoms are embedded in the role of a professor with academic freedom?
3. What do professors perceive to be the limitations of their role despite having academic freedom?
4. What do professors perceive as the role of a public intellectual?

In the first section, I describe the participants and their contributions on the topics of (a) their role, (b) power, and (c) public intellectuals. Also included are the issues they raised in the interviews. In the second section, I present a commentary to highlight the similarities and distinctions across the cases.

## **Participants**

The participants were recruited from Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. At one of the sites, this criterion was met. There were two participants from Sciences (both male), two from Humanities (one male and one female), and three from Social Sciences (two males and one female). At the second university, two male participants – one from Sciences and one from an applied area – contributed to the study findings. All participants had varying degrees of experience working in a university setting. Participant details are presented in Table 3.

The participant from an applied area can be termed an “outlier” (Freeman, 1998). Freeman (1998) reserves the term for outcomes from data analysis that do not fit into the analytic outcomes. In this context, I extend it to apply to one participant who lies outside the pre-established faculty affiliations. The distinction is necessary because it has been argued in the literature (Robinson, 2004b) that different disciplines (applied vs. fundamental) subscribe to different views of the purpose of university and that, in turn, leads to a different understanding of their respective roles. Since Ivan, the outlier participant, specialized in an applied field, his understanding of his role, the professoriate’s role in general, and the role of universities varied considerably. His views, however, helped in formulating questions that were later used to present a counterpoint with other participants in follow-up interviews.

## **Description of Participants**

All participants in the study were given an option to select a pseudonym if they wished. None did, so I assigned pseudonyms. Furthermore, I concealed identifying

Table 3

*Participant Demographics*

<b>Participant Name*</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
Adrian Anderson	Professor	M	17+	Sciences
Benjamin Bronze	Associate Professor	M	7+	Social Science
Cathy Cuthbert	Associate Professor	F	13+	Social Science
David Davidson	Professor	M	30+	Social Science
Erica Eagles	Associate Professor	F	24+	Humanities
Frank Foreman	Professor	M	25+	Humanities
Gordon Gustafson	Associate Professor	M	27+	Sciences
Howard Henley	Professor	M	30+	Sciences
Ivan Ishtu	Professor	M	30+	Applied Discipline

\* Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

information to maintain participant confidentiality. Despite an interview guide and my attempts to guide conversations in specific directions, each participant steered the conversation where they most wanted to go. These salient contributions are also included in this section.

### **Professor A. Anderson**

Professor Adrian Anderson was a full professor in Sciences and had been at the institution for over 17 years at the time of data collection. He secured tenure at his current university 4 years after joining it. Anderson was a prolific researcher who had numerous research grants and publications and also supervised numerous undergraduate and graduate students. He was involved in university governance committees prior to receiving tenure. Anderson claimed that departmental committees were more to his liking because he understood his colleagues and they understood him.

Professor Anderson held the view that traditionally tenure was meant to recognize one's research output, and it meant that the professor's general abilities were meeting a certain acceptable standard. These standards varied in different universities and at some prestigious universities signaled superlative research. Despite acknowledging that the role of professors was divided amongst teaching, research, and service, Anderson laid emphasis on research. Throughout the interview, Anderson repeated numerous times that tenure was awarded for research productivity. Anderson perceived tenure to mean that he was in control of his own research agenda and he reiterated that by remarking, "Tenure provides me the power to pursue research that is of interest to me" (Transcript 1, p. 5).

In describing threats to academic freedom, Anderson passionately spoke on several issues. These were: (a) funding for universities, (b) external pressures from

industry, (c) curiosity-driven research versus commercial research: “what is of benefit to the industry isn’t necessarily scientifically of interest” (Transcript 1, p. 7), and (d) potential pressure on curriculum to teach what industry wants or needs. Anderson saw most of the threats to fundamental research seeping in covertly through rules, regulations, and policies.

Anderson outright rejected the notion that faculty members have any real power and claimed further that any powers they do have are being stripped away. He said that threats to academic freedom are also stripping professors of the power to influence curriculum in the class. These, he said, came about because industry wanted graduates to come into the workforce equipped with certain skill-sets. These skill-sets were not necessarily good in the long run nor good for nurturing a scientist, yet they were seeping into the curriculum. He said, “Industry wants graduates who can start working right away, but that is not what our [field] should be about. We are not a training school. We are not in line to produce technicians” (Transcript 1, p. 5). He lamented that the training focus caused him to be concerned for his discipline.

Concerning public intellectuals, Anderson perceived them as general intellectuals. Anderson said,

Public intellectuals to me are the people you see interviewed on dialog programs and panels. Sometimes there are professors there, but mostly not. I guess this is a person that the public sees as an intellectual, but the person is probably a generalist. General intellectual. [Defined as] a spokesperson for a discipline or specialty area who addresses the public. I am not sure that “public intellectual” exists as a role within disciplines themselves. Although there are “celebrity

scientists,” for example, Suzuki and Kaku... they are not really communicating with scientists directly. (Transcript 1 p. 22)

General intellectuals, according to Anderson, were well-versed in the art of communication and were regarded by the public as intellectual. Anderson did not regard public intellectuals as experts in any one area. He said, “They [public intellectuals] can communicate their opinions well. I don’t think they are experts” (Transcript 1, p. 23). Anderson was clear that public intellectuals (and academics posing as such) should be honest about their expertise, their limits, and when they trespass outside those limits. He disliked the term public intellectual because invariably they were apt to transgress their areas of expertise and misrepresent scientific concerns.

Professor Anderson mentioned that he had participated in a different study soon after he joined the university, and the results from that study recommended that professors were to be role models. This suggestion irritated him, and he wanted to be clear that he saw himself as a scientist who dispassionately pursued truth; he had no time to be an actor or a role model. He needed to be researcher and teacher.

### **Professor B. Bronze**

Professor Benjamin Bronze was an associate professor in one of the departments in the Social Science faculty. He had been affiliated with the same department for over 7 years at the time of data collection. Bronze interpreted his role as a university professor to be that of an educator. He considered various activities he was involved in, such as teaching students in his discipline, contributing to the knowledge base in his field through publications, or sharing and exchanging ideas with colleagues in conferences and in various committees, as various forms of teaching and learning. Even in his role as mentor

to junior faculty, he saw his role as that of an educator: helping them with understanding norms, customs, and established practices. He declared that he was an educator in the broadest sense.

Bronze admitted that some other colleagues might draw a sharper distinction between researcher, teacher, and administrator, while others, although in the minority, might perceive their role as intellectuals. Bronze conceded that each faculty member defines and acts the role of professor depending on what they interpret the role to be. The reason for this discrepancy in interpretation arises because what qualifies as teaching, research, and service are too broad and varied in the collective agreements between faculty unions and the administration. For instance, the idea of service (which is 20% of the professor's workload) can include things like serving on a university committee, acting as an adjudicator on a grants committee, or serving in the community at large in service to the public (outside the university). Such vagaries were inherent with the interpretation, disciplinary biases, and modes regarded admissible at certain times. As a result, the workload and character of work would change appreciably depending on what the professor does.

Bronze was quite thorough in narrating his reasons why tenure was awarded. He said,

I mean the standard answer of course is academic freedom. And I think it is a good answer. ... the idea of it is meant to create the institutional conditions for – I tend to think of it as – bold and creative scholarship. (Transcript 1, p. 3)

Bronze said that tenure fell under institutional purview. In a practical sense, tenure terms are “institutional rules that are designed to allow certain types of behaviour for faculty,

including freeing them of certain constraints and fears so they can take on difficult or unpopular questions” (Transcript 2, pp. 3-4). Following this claim, tenure is pre-emptive protection against reprimand in case some unpopular position is taken. This job security provided freedom that Bronze described as allowing him to “stop looking for other jobs” (Transcript 1, p. 9) as that was a big distraction, both mentally and emotionally, when he worked as a part-time faculty member. Bronze felt that this insecurity during part-time employment kept him from discharging certain elements of being a professor.

Bronze ominously stated that he foresaw there to be an indirect threat in his position. He said,

Let me put it this way: direct threats – I think I have been spared. I am not aware of any. No one has picked up the phone and said, “What are you doing?” Indirect threats: there is an ambient sense of expectations of pressure coming from top-down. (Transcript 1, p. 22)

The threats that undermined academic freedom, tenure, and the viability of departments and units manifested in the form of budget allocations being calculated as directly proportional to the number of students registered in one’s particular course at the department level. At a larger level, he claimed, top-down pressures manifested in the forms of funding increases in certain programs and funding decreases for other programs. This, according to Bronze, was direct meddling in the university’s self-determination function. Other systemic threats to the ideal role of professor cited by Bronze were: (a) bureaucratic procedures, (b) grant agencies’ policies, and (c) fiscal pressures.

Bronze dismissed the idea that tenure gave him power in the classical sense. If influence were included in the scope of power, Bronze admitted that he might have some



power but no more so than any other person who could persuade, convince, or influence. Bronze admitted that it was easier to recruit participants for his research studies after receiving tenure. He surmised it might be because potential participants saw him as having gained credibility. Bronze also mentioned that having tenure had increased the number of requests to act as a peer reviewer for research publications and adjudication.

Bronze offered a list of three sources of threat to academic freedom. These were: (a) partisan agendas of editors and reviewers who favour one modality of research over others; (b) university administrators: “I think one of the biggest threats is coming from within the academy. University administrators who are pushing particularly corporate or business agendas at the expense of rigor and diversity” (Transcript 1, p. 16); and (c) peers who, under the guise of ethics, interfere with research design and accepted norms within the discipline.

Bronze said that the privilege of tenure comes with a tremendous number of obligations. Chief amongst these was to “investigate unpopular issues or to ask really hard critical questions” (Transcript 1, p. 27), and this is also what society expects from professors. Additionally, the public expects professors to provide a high quality education to students attending the university. This includes employable skills but equally importantly, if not more, “critical skills” (Transcript 1, p. 28). Furthermore, the public expects universities to be the hot bed of new ideas. Bronze explained,

There is also some expectation that we are an engine for new ideas and innovation, particularly on the technology and science side. That is particularly the view of the business world. They prefer to see R&D done by publicly subsidized institutions rather than themselves. This is one of the issues that came

out in Australia with sort of a negative spin – the government in Australia started saying that we will give particular preference in our funding to people who do defense research for our army. So, all of a sudden all these military studies and defense application stuff started creeping into universities. And their view was this is great – now we don't have to do it through the army. We can do it through the universities, which for some people who are pacifists, was problematic – they were pulling their hair out – “This is what the universities have turned into – we have become a branch of the Australian armed forces.” (Transcript 1, p. 28)

He was passionate about and spoke at length on the role of universities. He explained, as in the quote above, the important link between the role of the professoriate and role of the universities.

Bronze thought that overwhelmingly the term public intellectual carried a negative connotation with university professors. He said,

So the public intellectual has a negative tinge to it. I prefer to think of it as a broad term – of people who do engage the public – a little more directly than just sort of specialized writings in the classroom. (Transcript 2, p. 37)

Suggesting an alternate and more positive description, Bronze said that a public intellectual is “someone who actively contributes to public discourse” (Transcript 1, p. 37). Although public intellectuals could be immensely valuable for societies and universities, they are, according to Bronze, generally the people who engage directly with the media. Citing a few examples, Bronze explained,

Often [public intellectual] means that someone is a media darling: The Mark Kingwells, Ignatieff was one of these. Malcolm Gladwell. It is not that they are

not intelligent people, it is not that they are not academics, but they are more interested in some ways in their media presence than they are [in their] rigorous academic peer review presence. And demands of time tend to make them sacrifice one for the other at some level. And there is also a sense that some people have turned their nose up a little bit because to be popular, it means simplification to certain degree – to make the stuff digestible. (Transcript 1, p. 38)

Professor Bronze concluded the interview with two points that he said he needed to share regarding the role of professors: One, the public at large has taken a dim view of professors and that professors have gotten a “bad rap” (Transcript 1, p. 41), and this view is unwarranted because professors work very hard and engage in matters more than just teaching. Second, there is a trend that is turning “professors into bureaucrats” (Transcript 1, p. 41). He explained that under the guise of transparency, faculty members were increasingly being asked to account for their time: as though thinking, research, and other intellectual activities could be accounted for in a functional-structural way.

### **Professor C. Cuthbert**

Professor Cathy Cuthbert had been in the Canadian university system for over 13 years spanning across three universities in one of the departments in the Social Sciences faculty. Since having received a large research grant, Cuthbert had limited her participation in committee work at her university. Her views on the role of professors had shifted over time from that of a teacher to knowledge creator (through research) in her specific subject area. On a more practical level, she subscribed to the role description laid out through the collective agreement between the university and the faculty union to which she belonged. Drawing on her previous experience, Cuthbert said that specific

expectations varied considerably from one university to another. A more research-intensive university laid more credence and value on research activity than teaching, while a more balanced approach is practiced at a university that is not seen as research intensive. Cuthbert proclaimed that tenure was awarded “to reward publication production” (Transcript 1, p. 2). She said that more publications within a time-frame were considered superior to fewer in the same time span. Although quality was a consideration, the number of publications signaled tenure qualification. Other factors, such as teaching evaluations, were either not considered relevant or given a low priority in adjudicating tenure prospects of a faculty member. Teacher evaluations as a tenure criterion varied considerably from one institution to another. These practices, according to Cuthbert, were germane within a specific university culture. They were not written policies, just subscribed practices.

It seemed that Professor Cuthbert’s views on tenure, its purpose, and applicability were conflicted. Initially, Professor Cuthbert provocatively asserted that she would be happy to see the entire tenure system abolished because it promoted professors to stay on well past their best before date whilst their knowledge production activity dwindled. Additionally, and perhaps more disturbingly to Cuthbert, select few professors abused their power of being tenured. Through probing, she presented a more positive view of tenure by claiming that it offered the opportunity to enact academic freedom. Cuthbert said,

Having said that, [tenure] is important too because it does offer the academic opportunity to exercise academic freedom. The reason why tenure was put in place in the first place was to ensure that individuals would not fear that their jobs

would be terminated because they published unpopular opinions. (Transcript 1, p. 3)

In this, Cuthbert had dichotomous or unresolved views on the role of tenure. On the one hand, she argued for its abolishment, and on the other hand, she praised it for allowing her to exercise her academic freedom to publish unpopular points of views without fear of reprimand.

Concerning power, Professor Cuthbert identified three ways in which she had power. First, it was clear that tenure gave her “power to explore research topics based on [my] discretion” (Transcript 1, p. 4). This suggested that power for Cuthbert was expressed as freedom of choice. Second, power was expressed by her ability to publically share her opinions, especially those which perhaps were not particularly popular in specific times and regions. Finally, Cuthbert thought that power afforded her personal protection: “It just gives you some personal security – peace of mind” (Transcript 1, p. 4).

Cuthbert openly admitted that tenure was a privilege for professors as it provided job security unlike any other sector in society and it entailed “read[ing] books on interesting subjects and pursu[ing] any type of research that we like” (Transcript 1, p. 7) for a handsome pay. Alas, said Cuthbert, this privilege was unrecognized among her peers because most of her colleagues had not worked anywhere other than the university system – “in the real world” (Transcript 1, p. 8) – and had no idea of the conditions the general public face. Consequently, she argued that professors should research on topics that were relevant to the community and provide high quality education. Cuthbert declined to comment on the tension between her proposal for high quality education and

her previous response of honouring research productivity. When asked what societal benefits are fulfilled when faculty members have tenure, Cuthbert said,

None. It is all about the individual benefits accrued to that individual largely. Let me modify that: It is largely about that particular individual who has tenure gets the benefits. The societal benefits are that, for instance, the parents whose children are taking a class with the tenured professor can be assured that that professor has some level of competence. (Transcript 1, p. 9)

In Cuthbert's view, tenure was an outdated procedure that helped build up individual career and prestige of the tenured faculty member. Little or no benefits went to the public at large other than the satisfaction that a competent person was teaching in the classroom.

In discussing public intellectuals, Cuthbert explained that the term applies to: Someone who is or has been employed in academic sector, who writes or produces work or makes speeches that are largely targeted to nonacademic audiences, like the media and the general public, with the aim of influencing debate. And of speaking truth to power – the person is in a position where they can say things and not be worried that they are going to get fired or not promoted. (Transcript 1, p. 13)

Cuthbert's position on public intellectuals most closely resembled the conception of a public intellectual assumed at the beginning of this study. She explained that most of her peers did not hold this view and did not see themselves as needing to do or doing anything with the community in which their institutions existed. She contended that most of the silencing in the academy is self-imposed and does not originate from systemic forces.

Professor Cuthbert concluded the interview by saying that she was “intrigued” (Transcript 1, p. 16) by the study and the questions and that is why she agreed to participate. She did inquire if her experiences were out of the ordinary. She asked, “Are there others who have had run-ins with academic freedom issues and have self-silenced themselves as I have?” (Transcript 1, p. 17). Furthermore, she wanted to impress that while she believed in academic freedom, she was not sure that tenure was the best way to enact it. She declined the second interview in which I had planned to ask her to further explain her position.

### **Professor D. Davidson**

Professor David Davidson was a full professor in one of the departments in the Social Science faculty. He had been affiliated with the institution for over 30 years at the time of data collection. Davidson had held numerous administrative positions in addition to being part of the professoriate. He derived his sense of obligation from the Collective Agreement that existed between the university and the faculty union of which he was a member. He said, “My role as a professor is defined in the Collective Agreement to a certain extent” (Transcript 1, p. 1). This entailed teaching, research, and a service component. According to Davidson, teaching included undergraduate teaching, graduate teaching, and supervision of graduate students. Research, in his estimation, was quite subjective and varied within a university from discipline to discipline. The service component included serving on department and university committees as well as involvement in the broader community outside the university. Davidson conceded that although the Collective Agreement laid out the proportion as 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service, it was very hard to measure it and compartmentalize one’s

role precisely. Moreover, he said, “I don’t think many people think about the Collective Agreement as such” (Transcript 1, p. 2), and so they adopt the practices germane to their department or those they model their career after.

Davidson believed that tenure was awarded on the basis of “quality of teaching and quantity of research” (Transcript 1, p. 2). In the conversation that ensued as a result of this remark, he mentioned that since it was hard to assess the significance of one’s research, it was mere quantity of research that counted towards tenure. On the teaching end, student evaluations, successful graduate student supervisions, and the complexity of the courses being taught determined the quality of teaching. These factors could not be plugged into a formula; therefore, it was too hard to judge precisely or accurately on objective terms. Therefore, evaluation was left to the senior peers in the department who assessed their junior colleagues’ output and made recommendations for tenure.

Davidson stated that tenure was meant to give protection against dismissal: “Tenure means that you have job security. It means that you can say unpopular things and say controversial things without fear of being dismissed for saying controversial things” (Transcript 1, p. 2). He admitted that his area of research did not skirt close to the edge, and, as a result, he had not personally felt the sting of unpopularity or controversy due to his research. However, he believed that tenure was an important principle afforded to faculty members in the professoriate. The sources of reprimand, according to Davidson, came from colleagues within the department or discipline, the broader community that could demand the university silence the individual in question, or the government with a threat to cut off or stifle funding to the university.

Regarding the uniformity of tenure, Davidson said,



Well, the principle is standard across universities. The way it is employed and the definitions of things like what is appropriate quantity/quality of research and teaching and so forth probably varies from university to university. But I think every university works on the same principles of teaching and research.

(Transcript 1, pp. 3-4)

Davidson suggested that with legislation, such as whistle blower protection and union protections and the credence given to professional expertise, many public institutions have something that resembles tenure.

Davidson stated that his research was not very controversial; therefore, tenure had not changed his personal practices. Yet, at the same time, he came to the defense of tenure: “You defend this because there might be a time when the sorts of things that I do, do bring me in conflict with people” (Transcript 2, p. 4). Presently, however, Davidson did not think that it had changed his teaching practices or nature of service involvement and contributions. Generally, though, tenure provided a certain amount of job security, which, in turn, allowed him to take on research projects that he liked despite the fact these investigations could take a long time to complete or fail to produce any concrete results. He gave a hypothetical example based on his connections in the industry:

I mean I have a sense that if you worked for one of these think tanks (in my field), you got a particular project and there are stipulations that it has to be out by the end of the month. So you do what you can do by the end of the month and you produce it because that is the time schedule. And we (if I were on the think tank) would not do things that are deep because we would not have the time. We will have to keep our output up. With tenure, it allows me to do longer term kinds of

projects that don't show results in a given year. I mean I have been pretty productive over my career and always think of producing results, but sometimes it takes a while to gear yourself up to get ready to do a particular project, and tenure in the university allows you to do that, whereas if you were in a different work environment, you would probably be pushed about the project that we are working on this month kind of thing. (Transcript 1, p. 4)

It follows from Davidson's comments that had he worked in the industry where there is no tenure, he would be subject to time lines imposed by the owners or shareholders, which could prevent him from investigating matters deeply. Everything would be output driven. With tenure, there are fewer time constraints. Additionally, one can be selective: "do things that do not have immediate payoff at work" (Transcript 1, p. 4).

According to Davidson, the purpose of these powers is "an ability to speak truth to power" (Transcript 1, p. 5). Davidson described his own experience of being seconded to work in a nonuniversity, albeit in a public sector institution, as an expert from the university. He recalled that he had to speak on behalf of the employees working in this institution, who were not protected by tenure and needed certain things said. Because of the lack of protection of these public sector employees, their idea of what comprised controversial or on the edge was rather tame, according to Davidson. This speaking truth to power also, over time, had increased the credibility of university professors in the estimation of people working in other sectors such as industry and public service.

Davidson held a dim view of public intellectuals. He saw them as sales people who could market themselves and in the process gain fame: "There are people who generally appear to be very knowledgeable about their areas and can have a high degree

of credibility [in the media or public]” (Transcript 1, p. 13). These public intellectuals, he argued, would say something that had been accepted long ago in the discipline, and they would get notoriety and seem to be contributing something novel. On the other hand, Davidson admitted sometimes these public intellectuals “the likes of Mark Kingwell and Thomas Homer-Dixon, Richard Florida – who have a great deal of credibility and can attract a certain amount of public attention around certain issues – I think that is a very positive thing” (Transcript 1, p. 13).

Professor Davidson concluded the interview by stressing the need for emphasis on high quality teaching because when the students became prominent members of society, they acted on the lessons learned in the classroom. Through them, the role of the academic went beyond the scope of teaching and publication. Their work helps shape the decision makers of the future. In this regard, present day academics could be viewed as public intellectuals if one were to broaden its definition.

### **Professor E. Eagles**

Professor Erica Eagles was an associate professor in one of the departments in Humanities and had been at the university for over 24 years at the time of the interview. She primarily considered herself a teacher and described in numerous ways how her activities outlined contractually – be it service, research, or teaching, all led to teaching in one way or another. She lamented that teaching had, over the last decade, diminished in importance within various powerful circles within her university. She feared that this trend of devaluing teaching over all other activities, such as research and grant acquisition, was only going to cause dissatisfaction among the public about the role of universities in society. Eagles envisioned herself to be attending to the deficit in her own

way. She claimed to have taken this stance based on firm theoretical grounds. Eagles mentioned Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences and Coral Mitchell's work on the distinction between managed systems and natural systems as the basis for forging ahead in directions that were justified from her point of view.

Eagles believed that tenure was awarded so that faculty members across the university could do their work. It gave the tenured faculty members the power to tell the university administration (be it the Dean, Chair, or any other administrative or support staff) not to interfere with the matters that were within the purview of faculty members. She said,

How I see tenure across university is to give researchers and teachers the liberty to do their jobs without having to worry about politics. It's sort of like when you see the word *autonomous* in countries attached to universities, you know the autonomous means the army is supposed to stay out of there. (Transcript 1, pp. 2-3)

Based on these grounds, Eagles claimed that tenure had allowed her to do "very experimental" (Transcript 1, p. 4) work in her field with very little interference from the Chair of the department. She claimed that had she attempted similar work without tenure, she would have been relieved of her duties. In the end, though, these experimental forays had yielded results, which became mainstay in her discipline. In another context, Eagles stated that upon getting tenure she "became far less fearful... spoke up more openly," and it gave her a "huge boost in confidence" (Transcript 1, p. 7).

An interesting incident that Eagles described was that even after getting tenure, her classroom teaching methods were derided. Eagles' on-the-spot adaptation of a lesson

plan because of her professional assessment and judgment that the students were not getting the content was dubbed “disorganized” (Transcript 2, p. 8). She explained that it was a difference in the underlying assumptions of how lesson plans worked and evolved. She characterized these differences in epistemological terms as a constructivist approach versus a positivist approach to teaching, planning, and adapting that department administrators subscribed to:

I said, “Here is what I’m planning.” And every time I would stop and change gears I would say, “Okay, we’re here. Why am I doing this?” And if they didn’t know, I would say, “I’m doing this. This isn’t working.” It became a teaching moment for me to learn and for my students to learn. Every time I would stroke it out and write down in pencil on top what had changed and why. At the end of the year the whole thing was a complete mess. It was totally changed around, but the students understood and agreed. It was interesting: For someone in teaching it was interesting because I was coming from a constructivist background. The people who had complained bitterly against were *totally* structural positivists. (Transcript 2, pp. 8-9)

The same incident was used to justify academic freedom on the one hand and teaching intervention on the other.

Eagles said that the threats to academic freedom came both from within the institution and from outside. These could be classified under the themes: (a) defaming reputation: it was both the exercise of power under the name of academic freedom and the stifling of creative freedom, (b) excess of administrative work, and (c) peer pressure to conform. Eagles had cited numerous examples to explain her points but when

reviewing her transcript in the member checking process, she asked for those particular examples to be removed because they would have revealed her identity.

Eagles feared that tenured faculty members were not upholding societal expectations because they were failing to reach out to the public; instead, they were making their fields of study more “obscure and mythical” and “inaccessible” (Transcript 1, p. 14). Eagles thought that ideally faculty members would be engaged in challenging the status quo of societies and getting people to “reflect on their practices and assumptions, like artists” (Transcript 1, p. 15). Eagles urged faculty members to be (or become) public intellectuals, which she likened to a car mechanic: “restore the mysterious machine to working condition so that most of us can drive or operate [it]” (Transcript 2, p. 19).

Professor Eagles concluded the interview by reminding me that people always thought that “the grass is greener on the other side,” but the politics in the process of obtaining tenure was sufficiently complicated, and it broke a lot of people. She held firm the belief that tenure should be awarded not based on the internal politics of the institution but as a matter of having worked at the institution for a period of time.

### **Professor F. Foreman**

Professor Frank Foreman was a professor in one of the departments in Humanities and had been in the university system for over 25 years at the time of the interview. Foreman stated that he thought about his role as professor often. In the end, he described the role of the professor as that of a researcher although he tended to align his responsibilities in accordance with the collective agreement between the university and the faculty union (i.e., 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service). Foreman

contended that tenure was awarded on the basis of current accomplishments that signaled that there was an “obvious promise for future growth” (Transcript 1, p. 4).

Foreman raised concerns about the usefulness of tenure when it came to job protection. According to him, it was the Ontario Employment Equity Law that protected an individual from wrongful dismissal and not tenure. In actuality, tenure “restate[d] many aspects which [were] already in the employment equity law” (Transcript 1, p. 5), and lacked any legal powers. Therefore, tenure was an outdated concept. Foreman argued that tenure was still in practice because it was an old cherished practice of Western universities and had the function to put new scholars on somewhat equal footing with established scholars when the former secured tenure.

In Foreman’s estimation, tenure signaled to him that he had survived the initiation process. He said, “in terms of the membership business, you know it’s definitely been valuable to be a recognized member who has been through the ropes so to speak of an academic institution” (Transcript 1, p.7). Tenure had also allowed him to partake in many community projects, in which he previously could not participate because customarily only tenured members were accepted.

Foreman contended that tenure did not cause one to start speaking up on controversial matters, but that some people spoke up while others did not. There could have been a time when tenure served the basis for speaking up, but because of other regulations, he called tenure “a vestigial part” (Transcript 1, p. 3). The only thing that tenure afforded Foreman was the sanction to take on bigger projects, to write books, and to get more involved in university committees.

Foreman described diminished university funding as a central threat to academic freedom. It manifested in two forms: One, it made faculty members decide areas in which to develop expertise not based on their interest or on calls from within the field but based on the job market. Two, in order to remain viable, universities recruited more and more students by lowering both the admission standards and the quality of education delivered in the universities. The low-merit students in the system affected what could be taught to them, and eventually, when the students reached the upper years, what research they could do or assist professors with. It had an overall effect of lowering standards in both teaching and research. Foreman predicted that if this trend were to continue over the course of the next 15 years or so, standards would continue to plummet and universities would be shells of what they could be. Foreman contended that this emerging trend placed more burden on professors as they needed to be more skilled to teach and manage classes of students with a wider spectrum of intelligence and aptitude for learning, without contributing to lowering of standards. If professors could not develop this skill-set, the standards would continue to decline.

Foreman stated that public intellectuals served an important role in opening debates and getting people engaged. He lamented that people who can incite debate do not have a good, recognizable, and stable forum through which to engage the public. He suggested that it was due to a lack of these forums that faculty members sometime chose not to partake in public debates, but under better conditions, professors could be public intellectuals.

Professor Foreman drew considerably on his experience as editor-in-chief of a journal in his discipline and repeated several times that he saw the way for academics to



speak truth to power was to contribute to the knowledge base within their field by publishing in all kinds of journals and through all sorts of forums on the Internet. He did, however, worry that with the plethora of opinions on the Internet, it was becoming exceedingly difficult to tease out truth from fiction.

### **Professor G. Gustafson**

Professor Gordon Gustafson had been in the academy for over 27 years in the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences at the time of the interviews. He had been involved in a wide array of research topics in his field as well as the field of scholarship of teaching and learning. Gustafson saw his role as that of equipping students with skills and capacity on ways of obtaining further knowledge. To model this, Gustafson often indulged in problem-solving activities in class, akin to what a student might do in their professional lives.

Gustafson rejected the 40-40-20 delineation into research, teaching, and service as a valid way to organize work. He explained that if his university required contribution on committees, he did it, and the teaching component was not optional; therefore, that got done. What was sacrificed was research. Moreover, for a new faculty member, there might be a long period of time wherein one does a lot of research and another long stretch of time wherein one might do a lot of service. He maintained that much of the professorial role was self-defined and varied considerably depending on numerous intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Gustafson was not in favour of tenure. He suggested that tenure was awarded so that faculty members would not seek work in other universities or industry: “I presume tenure is there to protect a person from getting a job elsewhere” (Transcript 1, p. 2). His

objections to the tenure system were based on two grounds: (a) the process in which it is awarded and (b) ideological objection. Gustafson said that he did not accept the premise that tenure was there to protect against wrongful dismissal primarily because there were sufficient protections in regular employment standards within Canada. Moreover, since senior faculty members in the department decided on whether to grant tenure, old prejudices were perpetuated through the process:

So you get the older folk judging the younger folk coming in, so the young folk will never say anything bad because they will never get tenure if they say something bad. So they toe the party line. And then they get tenure. Then maybe they might change, but by that time, the process of tenure is long enough that they get inculcated with old ways – view points. (Transcript 1, p. 2)

Some senior faculty members, said Gustafson, also became unproductive – both in terms of serving on committees and in terms of producing research – and nothing could be done because they had tenure. He said that union contracts also protected faculty members if someone tried to take corrective action.

Gustafson believed that tenure was like any other permanent job in the industry with one additional safeguard of providing protection against criticism of one's employer. However, for the most part, faculty members do not criticize the employer, and, therefore, it was unused. Gustafson stated that it was hard enough to get his colleagues to serve on committees and would be harder still to get them passionate enough about anything the university did so that they would criticize the employer. He stated that, in fact, by allowing his colleagues to teach as they wished, tenure has ill-affected the education of the youth:

They can teach anything they like, anyhow they like, even though there is a syllabus. So that if there are two people teaching the same course, one of them can teach it totally differently with another textbook and everything. And that's their academic freedom. I don't believe in that one little bit. (Transcript 1, p. 5)

Academic freedom, according to Gustafson, served to undermine the integrity of academic programs, and there was little that could be done to take corrective measures against tenured faculty members who were the culpable party.

Gustafson said that he thought long and hard about what powers tenure had given him. In the end, he said no new powers were afforded to him as a result of getting tenure. He spoke out on issues of concern prior to getting tenure and continued to do so. He could not cite any example either within the class or outside it where his practices changed due to tenure. If anything, the powers that come as a result of having secured tenure have been stripped away. He stated, for example, a tenured professor could sign the passport form, but now that privilege was extended to others as well. Gustafson viewed this as nullification of professorial power.

Setting aside the debate about whether tenure should be granted, Gustafson also believed that external pressures were interfering with university business and the tenure system. The sources of these problems, Gustafson said, were

The public view and financial exigency. And then if you take another point of view or – it is not another point of view – but it is the fact that university administrations are declining to grant tenure track positions and opting for part-time employee – contract sort of thing. And that is the threat to tenure as well. (Transcript 1, p. 8)

Financial exigency manifested in forms of a declining number of tenure-track positions, acceptance of business grants, and “strongly requesting” (Transcript 1, p. 8) curriculum alterations to get a favourable ranking in Maclean’s magazine ratings of universities. By public view, Gustafson pointed out the general public held the impression of university professors as being overpaid for an easy job. He feared that unless more is done to dispel this notion, the university system as it exists would be a thing of the past.

Gustafson held that a public intellectual was “somebody at the university who is publically renowned” (Transcript 1, p. 14), akin to a public conscience, and he believed that university professors fulfilled this promise. He feared, though, that professors do not realize this role explicitly. He considered that every faculty member was an unquestioned authority in front of the students, and most professors did a splendid job of passing on ideas and disseminating knowledge. In this, all faculty members were public intellectuals. He wanted this privilege extended to all instructors at the university.

Professor Gustafson lamented that over the years his powers as a faculty member have waned. He complained that now it was “all about marketing” (Transcript 2, p. 16): the funds gained through various sources are given to marketing and promotions instead of supporting teaching. He kept returning to the notion that financial pressures pre-empted any conversations about the mission of any university.

### **Professor H. Henley**

Professor Howard Henley was a full professor and had been in the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences at the same university for over 30 years at the time of the interview. Henley posited that the primary role of professors was to profess. He thought that his colleagues make negative dispersions about him because of his interdisciplinary

research agenda and interests. Henley was troubled by this and thought that instead of criticizing him, his colleagues should have undertaken a similar intellectual pursuit and torn down the artificial walls in the academy.

Henley acknowledged that while there existed a memorandum of agreement between faculty members and the administration with regard to the distribution of their workload, in actual fact, the distribution was highly biased towards research. He stated that if one were an accomplished, renowned, or productive researcher, one's teaching reviews were overlooked, even if below general standards. He explained that there had been occasions wherein faculty members discovered that their passions lay in research and not in teaching and, therefore, resigned from their university to seek employment in the private sector. The bias towards research, however, went only so far. After repeated poor teaching evaluations, he said, one was either required to improve teaching or lose tenure.

Henley thought that tenure was awarded so that professors could assert "whatever they wanted" (Transcript 1, p. 3). So long as said professor remained within the "realm of intellectual discourse," one was duly protected. He explained getting tenure this way:

Ostensibly, it's so that, you know you can feel free to say whatever you want.

Well, not exactly. You have to be still responsible, right? You can't preach hatred or anything like that. You feel protected in the realm of intellectual discourse.

And I think that that's important now, nowadays. I think for a lot of Canadian academics, a primary example of what can go bad is the Olivieri situation at the University of Toronto. You know, she's finally recognized as somebody who had the courage to assert herself and speak out. (Transcript 1, p. 3)

When such protections were violated for unjust reasons, cases like that of Nancy Olivieri emerged. Olivieri, according to Henley, ought to be (and had been) commended for asserting her rights and speaking out in the face of repression. One of the reasons Olivieri suffered, explained Professor Henley, was because the academic system was under the influence of corporate interests, and it failed to protect her. These corporate interests need to be closely monitored by faculty members. Henley warned that without such vigilance, fundamental research or curiosity-driven research would be underprivileged or undervalued and, ultimately, underfunded in favour of “high flyers” (Transcript 1, p. 3). Henley explained high flyers as previously successful researchers whose contributions had helped the corporate sector generate profits. This, he warned, was a short-sighted view and dangerous if it continued to dominate operations in the academy.

Henley did not think that tenure had shielded him from anything untoward. However, there was a personal incident with regard to dealing in the private sector that Henley outlined as a way to contrast the situation at his university. On one of his sabbatical leaves, Henley was hired by a consulting firm as an expert to evaluate a product that was being considered for purchase. Henley recalled that his corporate colleagues urged him to approve the product as soon as possible: “I was quite amazed at the amount of pressure that was put on me” (Transcript 1, p. 4). He explained that he was repeatedly reminded that the company was paying him and he had the responsibility to help the company “manage the client,” which Henley explained was the euphemism for “don’t do anything strange that would cause us to lose this business” (Transcript 1, p. 4). Henley noted that observation, analysis, and truth were subjugated or sacrificed for the

sake of business. Moreover, everyone was expected to follow that dictum, unlike at a university where truth trumped all other motivations.

In his university, tenure and academic freedom had granted Henley the ability to straddle multiple disciplines despite having encountered narrow-minded objections from some of his colleagues. This was the chief advantage of tenure: despite oppositions he could not be stopped from pursuing interdisciplinary research agendas because that is what he wanted to do.

In the classroom, Henley touched on the issues of religion and science, and he recalled one particular incident when a student was more than just uncomfortable. Such situations, Henley admitted, do occur, but having academic freedom and tenure had allowed him to address these delicate and applicable issues without the fear of losing his position.

He identified three threats to academic freedom and tenure: (a) influence of corporations, (b) antagonism of religious organizations or views, and (c) antiintellectuals. Serving up an abbreviated explanation, Henley said, “resistance of so called ‘experts’ against established scientific theories” (Transcript 1, p. 9) constituted an ominous threat to academic freedom and the power of the academy. He gave numerous examples that elaborated on how these forces work to undermine academic freedom but asked that the details be omitted from the study.

Society expects little from professors, according to Henley. He laughingly said that professors were “objects of derision” (Transcript 1, p. 14). Hyper-specialization had led to this image of professors, said Henley. By narrowly focusing on research investigations, much of the complexity and applicability is lost, and artificial barriers

emerge. In such a constellation, professors are not even good to each other let alone society, posited Henley.

Because of the way the media treats and uses academics, Henley was cautious in ascribing the role of public intellectual to university professors. He cited examples wherein professors on television shows were asked to explain a complex issue in a very short time. This, and similar instances, only promoted simplistic and inaccurate understandings among the public, and no academic would want to be part of such a constellation. This leads academics to “abandon any relationship with the media and forego public appearance” (Transcript 1, p. 30). Henley cited another example of intelligent design getting disproportionate (and inappropriate) media exposure in the United States. He equated it to the idea that the media rather than the experts controlled the agenda; therefore, to be party to such unfair configurations was akin to supporting it. It is because of these unfair rules of the game that professors do not wish to be seen as public intellectuals, said Henley.

Professor Henley was extraordinarily generous with his time and explanations. He cited many personal examples to make his point concerning interdisciplinary research, public intellectuals, threats to academic freedom, and role of the professors in the societies they inhabit. He was critical of how sound bites were used out of context to construct alternative narratives and how fearful a proposition it might be for an academic.

### **Professor I. Ishtu**

Professor Ivan Ishtu was a full professor in an applied field and had been at his institution for over 30 years at the time of data collection. As a professor, Ishtu identified two distinct aspects of his teaching: one for the undergraduate students geared primarily



on developing employable skills, and a second for the graduate-level courses to understand the history and development of his field. This historical understanding was to supply the arsenal in the tool chest of the postgraduates to be able to critique the practices germane within his applied discipline.

Concerning his own role and the role of the professoriate, Ishtu stated that although there is an understanding of responsibilities being split into research, teaching, and service, there is considerable amount of overlap amongst these seemingly separate aspects. He said that the work at his university was,

Divided into three parts: 40% of our time is supposed to be spent teaching, 40% doing scholarly and creative activity, and 20% doing service. We have some quite conventional academics in the department, historians, engineers, but even they are very unconventional. (Transcript 1, p. 11)

He attributed the overlap in teaching, research, and service to the nature of his discipline and the way the programs were structured, combining various elements and delivering a comprehensive program.

Concerning tenure, Ishtu said that while in a practical sense tenure was awarded because of the legal obligation for meeting certain requirements, a more appropriate reason was because of the contributions one was able to make and expected to make in one's discipline. He said, "It is a privilege to teach, and the university expects its members to make a contribution to knowledge and the disciplines in which they are working. To say why is tenure awarded, I mean that's the answer really" (Transcript 1, p. 13). When pressed harder, Ishtu disclosed that he had held numerous administrative

posts during his academic career and had reconsidered his position on academic freedom. He said,

I have, as a long-time academic administrator, had moments where I thought that tenure was an outmoded concept. On the other hand, there are always these incidents that come out, that sort of point out that speaking out in some way with authority, not just sort of slamming someone or having an opinion without basis, obviously tenure should not be protecting you when saying stupid things, but it should protect you when you say something that is a legitimate contribution to public debate on an issue that maybe some others don't like. (Transcript 1, p. 13)

His nuanced position was quite different from other participants in the study.

Concerning power, Ishtu thought that the power of speaking truth to power was, first and foremost, practiced on junior faculty members in the department. The provision to vote and decide on someone's tenure was a power that was "expressed largely to junior faculty members as a hurdle that they have to pass" (Transcript 1, p. 15). He did say that tenure was not awarded to faculty members to speak truth to power, but it was more a career path. He explained:

I've chaired many of them myself. I don't think there is a sense ... that in exchange for the tenure, we actually expect you to speak out on issues or expect you to take a leadership role. The basic point is that you are expected to continue to perform to a high standard, a high level. You are supposed to continue up the promotion ladder after you have tenure and promotion to Associate Professor from Assistant and within 10 to 15 years, you should be applying for full professor. It is more a career path issue. (Transcript 1, p. 15)

Ishtu considered commercialization to be a covert threat that affected and would continue to ill affect the professoriate for the foreseeable future.

Time ran out before Professor Ishtu could speak on the subject of public intellectuals, and he declined a subsequent interview due to personal reasons.

A summary of responses to the questions with which the study began are presented in Table 4.

### **Cross Case Analysis**

The research questions guiding this study were focused on the understandings tenured university faculty members had of their role as professors within both their university and society at large. The data analysis was exploratory, aiming to provide a preliminary voice in the larger debate concerning the role of professors as the participants saw it. In the following sections, three broad themes that emerged from cross-case data analysis are described. Under each broad theme, multiple subcategories are used to provide depth and further detail. The three themes are: (a) professorial identity, (b) professorial power, and (c) professorial silencing.

#### **Professorial Identity**

The key characteristics of the responses to the questions of what the role of professors is, what could the ideal role of professors be, and what does public intellectual mean to participants coalesce to form this theme. Professorial identity is a concept that aims to capture the nuances of the faculty members' perceptions of their roles as professors. At the outset, all the faculty members made reference to the general role of professors, which included teaching, research, and service. However, what they chose to concentrate on when asked to describe their ideal role or when they described public

Table 4  
*Summary of Findings on Entry Questions*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Public Intellectual</i>
A. Anderson	Primarily researcher, but teaching, too	No power except in the classroom	Dim view: General Intellectual – communicator, not expert like a true professor
B. Bronze	Educator – even research publication as a kind of education	No power; only ability to influence junior faculty	Someone who contributes to public discourse
C. Cuthbert	Collective Agreement (initial stages teaching – later research)	Power is in the hands of a few. It is generally gendered. Is often misused. Should ideally be to speak truth to power	Academic who speaks out to influence public debate
D. Davidson	Collective Agreement (varies over time). Primarily a researcher but teaching is important too	Power to influence students, speak out in public, and influence future	Dim view – generally people who can market themselves (don't add a lot that is new). Can be powerful because of the outlet
E. Eagles	Teacher – broadly defined	Power to speak her voice and stop worrying	Demystifies complex issues; makes these accessible and clear
F. Foreman	Researcher primarily, but has to discharge the 40-40-20 distribution	Power to shape the field of expertise. Definitely not the power to speak truth to power	Good to start the debate; professors lacked the platform
G. Gustafson	Important ways to obtain knowledge and pass it on to others	No power – it has been stripped over the years	A public conscience; someone in the university who is renowned and respected. Faculty members already do this
H. Henley	To profess: in class, public, field of expertise – future.	To pursue inter-disciplinary research; be more discriminating in choosing topics, tasks, students	Professors are reluctant and withdrawn as public intellectuals; they are forced to explain complex things simplistically, which leads them to withdraw
I. Ishtu	Amalgamation of teaching, research, and service	To speak truth to power; however, the contribution was in support of power	—

intellectuals differed appreciably from each other and gave a nuanced view of the standard distribution of the 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service components of their role. Data analysis yielded several factors that can be attributed to shaping professorial identity.

**University culture.** Most professors referred to the components of teaching, research, and service in their introductory description of their role. The ratio of the distribution varied notably based on university affiliation, even if only in practice and not in posted formal documents. For instance, Anderson stated anecdotally that at research-intensive universities, “in practice, the work distribution is 80-10-10 between research, teaching, and service” (Anderson, Transcript 2, p. 3) implying that the nature of work for professors varies depending on which university they find themselves in. Cuthbert echoed the same sentiment by recalling that the emphasis on teaching varied considerably depending on the university and that the professors implicitly understood this. Henley also said that the ratio of the workload is 40-40-20, but it is implicitly understood that the research component is the most important one. Commenting on the greater importance placed on research, Henley said:

I think that’s actually kind of true although it’s not explicit. I mean there is a lot of psychological pressures that go on. If you’re a highflying researcher, you might have very low teaching reviews, but it’s not really, I don’t think, seriously considered as an issue. (Transcript 1, p. 2)

These variances as suggested by professors imply that the university institution shapes the role of professors to a great extent.

**Stage of career.** Depending on the stage of one's career, the ratio of work distribution among research, teaching, and service also shifts appreciably. Cuthbert, for instance, stated, "I think, as time has gone on and as I have progressed through my career, I find myself devoting more time to my research than to my teaching or service" (Transcript 1, p. 1). Gustafson saw the matter slightly differently. He said that after having secured tenure, he did whatever needed to be done, irrespective of the 40-40-20 delineation of work as per the collective agreement and often at the expense of his own research:

I know there is a 40-40-20 type delineation. I find that hard to apply in any situation. If there is work to be done, it gets done. And if the 20% university community part of it needs doing, it gets done. Often to the detriment of the research in my case. (Transcript 1, p. 2)

He admitted that he did not ask untenured faculty members to take on additional service duties because presumably they would be working on securing tenure. The shift in focus is only possible if the professor has ample job security to make a judgment call.

Likewise, Davidson said that it is hard to measure and compartmentalize one's work precisely, but over one's career, the workload distribution works out to 40-40-20:

You know the nature of the kind of professional work that you do in a university makes it very difficult to determine. Did I do exactly equal amounts of teaching and research? Those things are very different kinds of functions, and it is hard to measure them. There is a clear understanding about teaching – about the number of courses taught and so forth. Research is a little bit less clear about exactly what expectations are. (Transcript 1, p. 2)

It follows that the stage of one's career shapes conceptions of what the role of the professor should be and that, in turn, alters one's perception of the role of professors.

**Personal inclinations.** Each person brings personal inclinations or biases to the professorial role that shape professorial identity. Whether these inclinations are inherent or shaped by the academy is of no consequence, just that they are important factors in determining professorial identity. The two primary descriptors that participants used were researcher and educator. Anderson, Cuthbert, Davidson, and Foreman aligned themselves with primarily being researchers, while Bronze and Eagles saw their functions primarily as educators or teachers. Even the research output, such as publications, in the estimation of Bronze and Eagles were elements of educating their readers.

Henley claimed that a professor's job was to profess: whether in class or through one's publications, professors professed, opening their claims to examination, disputation, and repudiation. From that standpoint, Henley viewed the professor's role as that of asserting small-t truths that were subject to revision and modification under new contexts, periodically or generationally.

These three factors, namely, university affiliation, stage of career, and personal inclination, accounted for departure from the normal of 40% research, 40% teaching, and 20% service workload distribution of their job. This, however, was only one aspect of professorial identity.

Other aspects that shaped professorial identity were participants' understandings of the ideal role of professors. If professors were free of all constraints in the universities, what would their job look like? To this question, there were a wide variety of responses. On the one hand, Anderson and Cuthbert could not conceive of such a scenario. In fact,

Cuthbert advocated for restraints. She said, “We need restraints. If we did not have oversight a lot of us would not be doing our job” (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 12). Other responses referenced classroom instruction, research topic selection, and societal implications.

**Classroom instruction.** Foreman’s answer to the ideal role of professors without constraints solicited a complicated response based on what transpires in the classroom. Foreman contended that students’ competence ranged widely on the spectrum, and it was difficult to cater to the brightest because then the students on the lower spectrum of the aptitude scale were left behind. The decision the professor had to make, therefore, was what to deliver to whom and how. This was an ethical decision, and one was faced with it all the time. If monetary restraints were eliminated, Foreman contended that diversified classrooms with diversified curricula could be offered for students based on their merit. He explained it this way:

Well-educated people are going to be an elite. They are going to serve their community well as an elite. They are going to be responsible. They are also going to usually benefit themselves. And we do not have an elite group of students. We have some students who are going to be elite, and we have some who aren’t because of those economic pressures and that, so you are confronted with a very bad decision to make. Am I going to teach the small group and basically turn my back on the others? In other words, they [the elite] are never going to get as much as these guys [the others] will, but they could get something, but if they get something, then I’ll have to do it in a way that they don’t get quite as much. So I’ll give them everything and after that I’ll throw them in the garbage. That’s the



decision. I don't want to make that. I will make the decision to try and give everybody as much as possible, but it does mean that those highly inspiring, absolutely exceptional, highly individualized kinds of educational experiences are very, very hard to deliver and would be easier to deliver if some of those constraints weren't there. (Foreman, Transcript 2, pp. 26-27)

Eagles, too, commented on her desire to see instructional practices freed from outside interference. She said, "It would be nice if the Chairs [of departments] did not interfere in classroom teaching" (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 18). Eagles' documentation of her foray into experimental teaching (described in an earlier section) was in part brought on by the Chair's intervention because some colleagues did not agree with the constructivist approach that Eagles had adopted.

The content and method aspects of classroom instruction seemed to be sensitive topics. Changes in the content, or the method of teaching, or even questioning techniques employed, seemed to strike at the heart of the issue of professorial identity and elicited passionate responses from the participants. Consequently, it was an important component of defining professorial identity.

**Research topic selection.** Participant responses concerning the ideal role also dealt with research topic selection. Anderson said that, in an ideal world, new faculty members would choose research topics based on their interests rather than what was lucrative or promoted by university administration. Gustafson said that without restraints there would be "room for people with ideas with no immediate applicability" to pursue their research (Gustafson, Transcript 1, p. 14). Bronze, on the issue of research topic selection, speculated that the research topics would be more "outrageous" and researchers

would “ask impertinent questions” (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 35). He cautioned that such a scenario could have some undesirable outcomes:

You might get an interesting mix of questions that are even more esoteric because people can go ahead and do them and not worry about the consequences. Like, I am really into 12<sup>th</sup> century fishing nets. I am going to do that. Nobody cares about it, but I can do it... People will be navel gazing more. (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 36)

He also offered a more generous view. Without constraints, one could see the “return to the classical style of research” marked by “more freedom, but also more esoteric” (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 36). Highlighting more favourable features of such a scenario, Davidson suggested that not only individuals but also the universities at large could benefit from a financial-restraint-free environment. Referencing more subtle ways in which restraints play out in real life, Davidson said that researchers select topics based on what resources are available and not necessarily based on far-reaching effect or interest:

We can get money to do one thing, but we cannot get money to do something else. So we study the thing that we can get money for, and we don’t study the thing that does not get money. I mean I have certainly heard people say – no justification, but I have heard more than one person say – we could get rid of malaria very easily, but malaria affects poor people in poor parts of the world and there is no money in finding a cure or eliminating malaria – I cannot find money to do that kind of research; therefore, I do research on heart disease, which affects wealthy White people in wealthy areas of the world. (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 12)

Whether real or imagined, the restraints described by the participants played a prominent part in the roles of professors. It affected their classroom teaching and research topic selection, and it also had societal implications.

**Societal implications.** Henley and Eagles proposed some of the most creative and imaginative responses wherein professors would have a prominent role in society. Eagles said that without constraints, faculty members would take on leadership roles in local and international communities. In the same vein, Henley said that societies could look favourably on tenured faculty members and pay attention to their pronouncements since their assertions would not be motivated by protecting their jobs. He explained it this way,

“Look. We’ve got these people who are protected. Why don’t we pay more attention?” This is like an investment of a sort. What are we getting for this investment? Instead of just criticizing them, go and grab them and say, “Look. We gave you tenure, tell us something that we should know about.” You have to suffer the consequences because this guy is going to maybe say things that you don’t want to hear, but that creates the ongoing interaction. (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 25)

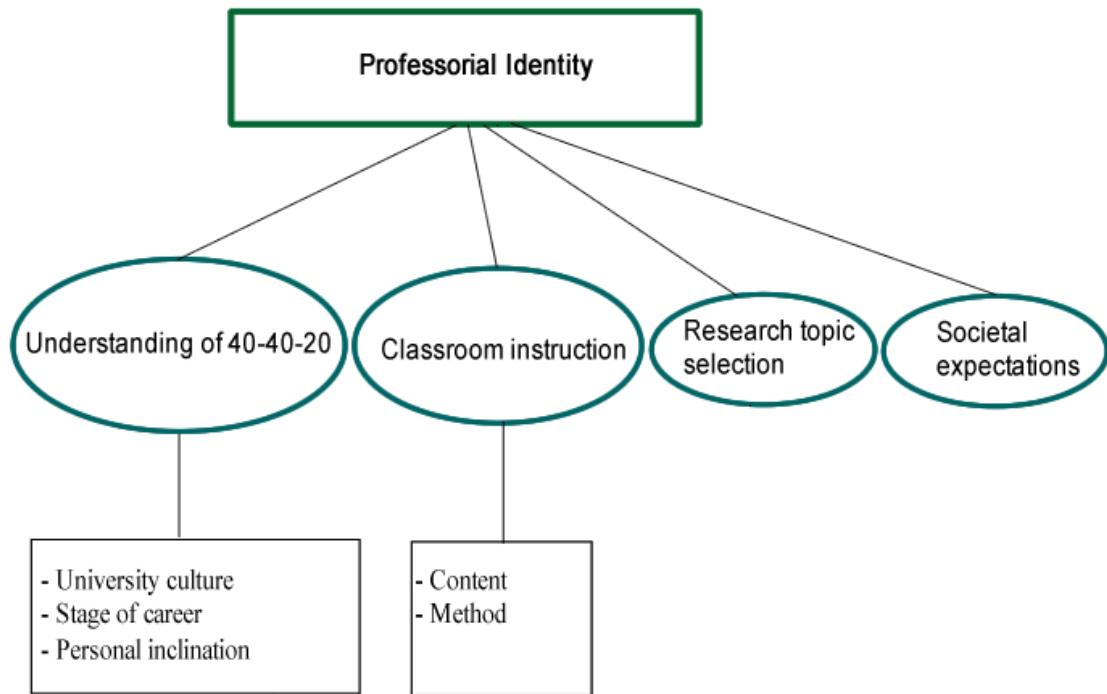
Both these perspectives envision the role of the faculty member extending to the larger public.

In summary, the data in the study revealed that in addition to the explicit definition of the role of professors – the 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service distribution of the workload – other components also influenced the concept. Another aspect of understanding the professorial role was to look at its ideal form as per Weber’s (1922/1968) idea of *verstehen*. The responses from that line of inquiry yielded issues

concerning classroom instruction, research topic selection, and societal implications. It was understood that all these aspects worked at varying degrees at different times to shape professorial identity. A pictorial representation of what was unearthed by participants concerning professorial identity is depicted in Figure 1.

### **Professorial Power**

The second major theme to emerge from cross-case data analysis was professorial power. This power was highlighted in the literature and was assumed to exist at the outset of the study, but its meaning deepened based on the nuanced presentations from the participants in this study. Professorial power refers to the perceived power that university faculty members enjoy as a result of having tenure. Entering into the study, it was assumed that the professors were aware of the various kinds of powers they wielded from their privileged position in society. What I learned from my participants was something altogether different. On the one hand, some participants rejected the idea of having any power whatsoever because of their tenured position, and rather suggested that the little powers that they had to begin with have been eroding over the last little while (Gustafson). On the other hand, some eloquent and nuanced understandings of powers were recited (Bronze, Davidson, and Ishtu). The responses from the participants fell into three categories: power for knowledge creation, power over people, and power to challenge.



*Figure 1.* Pictorial representation of professorial identity.

**Power for knowledge creation.** This theme subsumes power related to knowledge creation, dissemination, and protection. The three corresponding categories that emerged from the data were: freedom of selecting research topics, making knowledge claims, and being gatekeepers.

The freedom of selecting research topics was the most straightforward category that was clearly understood as one of the chief powers of tenure and was repeatedly echoed by participants. Primarily, this professorial power was understood to grant professors freedom to study what they liked and how they liked it. Across all participants, this was clearly identified. Cuthbert, for instance, said that tenure provided her the “power to explore research based entirely on your discretion” (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 4). Anderson echoed a similar sentiment and said that unlike his untenured colleagues, who felt obligated to pursue research that would bring in money for the university, he could pursue what was of interest to him. He said:

Power to pursue research that is of interest to me that might not necessarily be motivated by financial short-term, medium-term, or long-term financial gains. It gives me power to perform research for the sake of it. For the sake of answering scientific questions and pursuing intellectual problems. (Anderson, Transcript 2, p. 5)

The issue of topic selection was not only motivated by interest, as with the case of Cuthbert and Anderson above, but also based on time factors as mentioned by Davidson. He said that one of the powers of tenure was the freedom to select “longer-term kind of projects” (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 4). In practical terms it meant that as a tenured professor he did not have the kinds of time constraints that his colleagues in industry did,

and time factors were determined more as intrinsic to the project than on external considerations.

Concerning making knowledge claims, Henley said that tenure granted him freedom to explore any area or topic of his research and to make claims from those investigations:

Peace of mind allows me to investigate things without having to worry about, you know, am I going to be offending someone. As I said before, I'm fortunate that I don't, I'm not working in an area of great controversy. [name omitted] is not in the same situation, right? He's doing and saying things that are really exposing corporate greed. (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 7)

Expressing a similar point about making knowledge claims, Foreman said, "One of the things that professors do is discover unexpected truths" (Foreman, Transcript 1, p. 9). By way of explanation, he said that sometimes discoveries were made quite accidentally, and as a tenured professor there were no dangers in making those knowledge claims public.

In a more detailed account of powers of tenured professor, Bronze mentioned three things that spanned the issues of topic selection and making knowledge claims: One, tenure ensured "my research subjects [are] more likely to participate or take me seriously" (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 13). Implications of his assertions were that investigations by a tenured faculty member were considered more credible than nontenured faculty members or a student researcher. Bronze observed that as a tenured researcher, his ability to recruit participants improved considerably. Bronze said that having tenure "opened doors with some actors... particularly research subjects" (Bronze, Transcript 2, p. 13). Two, tenure emboldened Bronze to take on more daring or sensitive

topics to investigate. Three, having tenure also helped in his collaborative endeavors. He stated, “[Tenure] also helps in mobilization of other researchers” (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 14), thereby starting more expansive research projects that were likely to be more meaningful. Eagles summed up a similar sentiment by stating, “Tenure gives me power to speak my voice – to stand up and be counted” (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 5).

Finally, on the issue of being a gatekeeper, the most direct assertion came from Bronze. He said,

The peer review process – when people are trying to get published or write books, or what have you – and who they approach for review. I got approached a number of times for peer review when I was tenure track or not even tenure track, but they knew who I was. So you didn’t have to have tenure to be involved in that process, but having tenure probably helps because you are more established and that is an important power... actually, I would say that is more direct, in that you are having very direct influence over whether someone gets to build their research publication record – and that has very serious consequences for their career.

(Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 14)

Bronze’s claim implies that by serving on peer review boards for journals, conferences, and grant granting bodies, professors had power to determine what got included in the knowledge base of their respective fields. In this regard, they were knowledge creators, they asserted claims, and they were also gatekeepers of what was deemed to be the credible knowledge base.

**Power over people.** A classical understanding of power could be expressed by stating that someone has authority over someone else. Only a few participants talked



about this power. While Bronze and Ishtu cited it directly, Gustafson mentioned it in relation to his teaching.

Bronze acknowledged that he had not thought about power prior to reading the interview guide questions, but he had been thinking about it since then. He said, “I suppose in one way, it gives, as I said earlier, a bit more power over junior faculty who do not have tenure – I suppose, but I never think of it that way. But I suppose it is true” (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 12). He explained that this power did not mean that he could get the junior faculty to do what they did not want, but he could influence their service activities, research agendas, and strategies to procure tenure. Ishtu also said that his powers were expressed over junior faculty. He said, “Well, of course the issue of tenure is expressed largely on junior faculty members as a hurdle that they have to pass” (Ishtu, Transcript 1, p. 15). He explained that junior faculty members had to meet the demands and expectations of the senior tenured faculty members.

Explicating the power dynamics between the faculty members and students, Gustafson said,

As far as students are concerned, they [faculty] are on trial in front of students.

Anything that is said there... everyone [students] thinks that is the truth.

But why does it matter?

Some of us at [university name omitted] are incredible – in terms of dissemination of ideas and their interpretation of what is going on in the world – they are really amazing... I don’t consider myself to be one. I am just a slugger. (Gustafson, Transcript 1, p. 14)

Gustafson was implying that professors had power over students and that students accepted it whether or not the professors were deserving of such power. Through that and subsequent discussions, it was apparent that Gustafson was modest, but he was also trying to convey that professors had tremendous power in the classrooms whether they acknowledged it or not. Some used it cautiously while others gave it no regard or outright misused or abused it.

Cuthbert also brought up this sentiment of influencing students. She said that one of the obligations of tenure was “towards students. Not to forget that we are here because of them. And theoretically they should be our first concern”– to provide top education as professors were “sage on the stage” (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 8). When asked, she explained that the point was theoretical because, in reality, “more and more universities are pushing us to the research stream because that brings in money” (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 8). Her remark suggests that while Cuthbert recognized the privileged position of tenured faculty members, she admitted that their attention (including her own) remained elsewhere.

Within the research context, but dealing with people, Bronze also said that the power of tenure gave him “More authority in dealing with particular research subjects. And in some cases, other people in the academic community” (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 12). These powers manifested in getting the right participants and research collaborators to participate in the studies initiated by Bronze. He speculated that without tenure he could not have conducted such studies or would not have obtained participation of the right candidates.

**Power to challenge.** Power to challenge refers to the ability of faculty members to challenge assertions at both the local and societal levels. There was no clear consensus on this issue. Bronze, Cuthbert, Davidson, Eagles, Henley, and Ishtu commented that the power to challenge was an important function of tenured faculty members, while Foreman and Gustafson explicitly denied that tenured faculty members were granted powers to challenge authorities. Anderson's response fell somewhere between those two poles on the spectrum.

Highlighting the importance of challenging authority, Cuthbert said, "The power, if you choose to exercise it, to express opinions that may not be particularly popular in certain times or geographic contexts" (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 4) was an important and necessary function of academics. She said it was not a privilege although some of her colleagues saw it as such and used it only when it suited them:

There is no one else in this world that has the type of job security that we do.

There are many people who work extremely hard for less than minimum wage in this country and other countries around the world. So we are extremely privileged, and we need to acknowledge that. It is not a right. I don't see it as a right.

(Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 7)

She added, "And a lot of people don't see their role is to speak truth to power," while she saw that as a core responsibility of her position (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 14).

Bronze presented the idea this way: "We use the privilege to investigate unpopular issues or to ask really hard critical questions. If we are not going to do it, who is?" (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 27). He clarified that he understands that not everyone could be engaged in the kinds of research that raise troubling questions:

That is not to say that every single person doing research in the university should be asking earth-shattering “Galileo asking the Pope” sort of questions, but there is a sense that you should be asking important questions somewhere at some level. And this doesn’t even have to be in research. I appreciate that some people have this detailed incremental research that doesn’t even look remotely political, but it comes up in your teaching. Might come up in the way you train and the types of debate you contribute to in the public sector. (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 28)

This was an important clarification that Bronze provided, given that many participants advocated the necessity to ask uncomfortable questions and yet there was a lingering doubt as to whether everyone could ask such profound questions.

When asked how the tenured position is a privileged position, Eagles explained, “Because you’re allowed to say pretty well anything you want. And because it’s understood that by the time you get tenure, you’re considered professional enough, expert enough, to not misuse, mishandle, or misrepresent that power...”

Because it allows you to have a freedom you would not have in business...

Without tenure you would have to align your work to the status quo exactly whereas it allows you to be creative, individualistic, and innovative. (Eagles,

Transcript 1, p. 13)

Eagles remained firm that a faculty member’s responsibility was to take complex ideas and make them accessible to the public and leadership alike:

I think they should expect us to be able to take a leadership role, to have opinions, to model reflective and analytical thinking, to help open doors, to increase curiosity and a desire to learn in other people, and to de-reify and demythologize

our areas. I think we should be translating, not post modernizing, you know. I think some of my colleagues write the most amazing stuff that nobody can read. I think part of our job is to translate for others, for the community, and to make our areas accessible. (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 14)

Addressing a similar issue of explaining complex matters, Henley cautioned that sometimes there is a desire to look for simple solutions, but it is not in the interest of anyone to make things simpler than they really were. He said,

So I think that part of the responsibility of a professor is to say, “Hey, wait a minute. These polarizations are not healthy. Issues are complex. There’s a lot of nuance going on here. Let’s have a look at what’s really going on.” I mean society, I think, is intrinsically really complicated, and people are always looking for oversimplified solutions. That’s where dogma comes in. I don’t necessarily criticize religious dogma here; it could be a dogma that says, it might be coming out of a mouth of an economist who says, “Well, you know things will rectify themselves. The invisible hand sort of stuff. No, it doesn’t necessarily work. I really believe that you need regulation of economic enterprises.” (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 10)

The central claim here was that tenured faculty members had the power to challenge the status quo whether that was in operation at the university, societal, among the powerful elites, or governmental levels. Davidson said it most succinctly: professors had the “obligation to speak truth to power” (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 8), and while some diplomacy needed to be exercised so as not to endanger the viability of the institution, the general tenor held:

There are a number of professors in the institution who have no difficulty speaking out very strongly. So I said that there is a danger about the balance of these things, but at this point, I think people have been pretty solid in terms of feeling that they still have the protections of tenure and that they have the right – or perhaps obligation – to speak out what society knows (or needs to know) about problems/issues that people have. (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 7)

Ishtu summed up the issue of power by saying the responsibility of the faculty members was to speak truth to power, but it had to be based on merit and not mere baseless opinion:

The ability to speak truth to power. I have to say that there have even been some recent incidents here [...] there are always these incidents that come out, that sort of point out that speaking out in some way with authority, not just sort of slamming someone or having an opinion without basis, obviously tenure should not be protecting you when saying stupid things, but it should protect you when you say something that is a legitimate contribution to public debate on an issue that maybe some others don't like. (Ishtu, Transcript 1, p. 12)

It follows from claims by the participants that while the responsibility to speak truth to power was paramount, it had its limits.

Similar to the point raised by Ishtu above, Anderson said the authority to influence the public and powerful elite alike does not come because of a tenured position but because of the title in front of the name. He said, "I'm not sure that the public perception is affected by whether one is tenured or not. I think the title 'Dr.' or 'Ph.D.' is more important in this regard" (Anderson, Transcript 2, p. 20).

An alternative position concerning power over people was that tenure did not provide any power to challenge authority. Gustafson said, “I thought about that, and I thought: you know, I don’t have any power whatsoever. I don’t believe that I would do anything different with tenure than with a contract, quite honestly” (Gustafson, Transcript 1, p. 4). He denied that tenure obligated him to do anything outside his job description:

In my mind, I am getting paid and my obligations are to do what I am paid to do. Even if that means criticism and all of that. So tenure doesn’t imply obligations; the payment and the contract, which I suppose is the tenure, implies that I have obligations. (Gustafson, Transcript 1, p. 10)

He reiterated that his job description was to teach, do research, and serve on committees. When prompted if having tenure gave him job security and in return he was to pose difficult questions in his field and of his employers, social policy makers, industry, governments, etc., Gustafson simply said, “No” (Gustafson, Transcript 2, p. 16) and directed me to his response in the first interview:

So you can say something controversial and still be protected by the union, not by tenure. And the public opinion will do quite a lot. With that Apotex case, the public opinion came into play as well. But I don’t know all the details about it. (Gustafson, Transcript 1, p. 12)

My subsequent conversations and my probing questions during the interviews had me later write in my research journal that Gustafson strongly believed in the court of public opinion and opposed the tenure system because, according to him, it created mediocre workers.

A slightly different take from Gustafson, but still a view that proclaims that tenure does not award the powers to speak truth to power, was posited by Foreman. He denounced the idea that tenure gave one the powers to challenge authority:

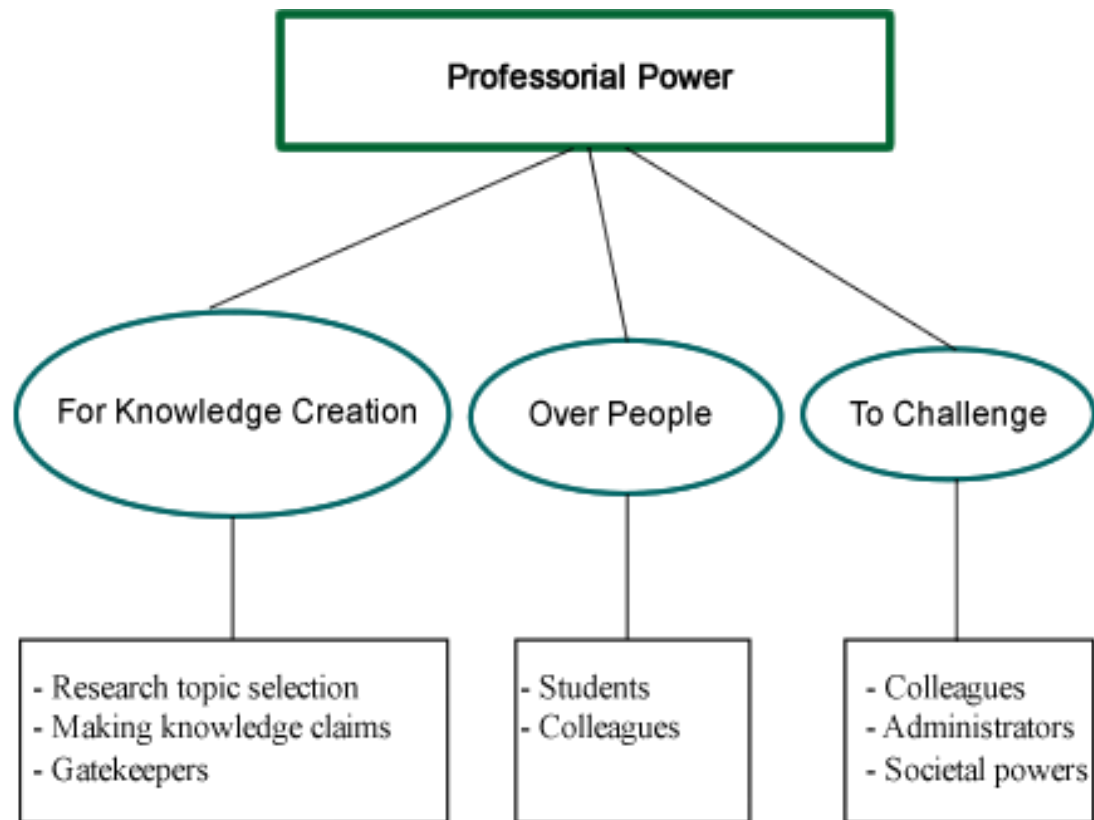
I want to emphasize, I don't think it gives you the power to speak truth to power. I think that's a question of character and you're going to do it if you're good at it, and you're not if you're not. I think in terms of not getting in hot water, it's Ontario Employment Law that is going to protect you, and by the way, it will.  
(Foreman, Transcript 1, p. 8)

According to Foreman, it was a matter of one's character and temperament.

Irrespective of the positions taken by Gustafson and Foreman, and notwithstanding if people actually practiced it, the idea of questioning authority based on small-t truths was central in discussing obligations that came with tenure. It was also seen as the goods discharged in lieu of getting tenure.

In summary, professorial power was a complex issue spanning across the teaching, research, and service components of a professor's work. Furthermore, it was a troubling issue with no obvious ready-made response. All respondents admitted that the questions around power gave them pause. Yet, a complicated concept of professorial power was formulated by their responses. The pictorial representation of professorial power is presented in Figure 2. This contested conception of professorial power and complicated issue of professorial identity work in tandem with some of the obstacles identified by participants to comprise the third and final theme: professorial silencing.





*Figure 2.* Pictorial representation of professorial power.

## **Professorial Silencing**

Professor silencing, as it emerged from the data, referred to the idea that professors were silent by choice or had been silenced by the circumstances that they perceived while discharging their roles as university professors. Every participant in the study, with the exception of Ishtu, cited financial exigency as a looming threat to universities in general and its deleterious effect on professorial silencing. However, there were also considerable other reasons presented as threats that contributed to professorial silencing. The responses can be broadly categorized into three themes: (a) financial exigency, (b) governance issues, and (c) social issues.

**Financial exigency.** One might be inclined to think that because the financial exigency clause is in the AAUP (1940) statement on academic freedom and tenure, the participants were particularly aware of the financial pressures. While that awareness might have contributed to this theme, the diversity in which financial pressures were perceived by the participants signalled more than just a theoretical knowledge. Participant responses showed that the financial pressures of universities affected research, teaching, and even selection of areas of specialization.

Concerning the effects on research, Anderson said, “So government funding and related priorities have changed over the years as they like to fund research that will lead to industrial applications and economic benefits. Unfortunately, what is beneficial to industrial profits is not necessarily of scientific importance” (Anderson, Transcript 2, p. 7). This pressure, according to Anderson, had changed the focus of professors from areas of research of interest and importance to those which might bring in money for their respective universities or bolster links with the corporate sector.

Similarly, Davidson said that external partnerships posed the greatest threat to the professoriate. He said, “I think the threats to academic freedom are that we are very reliant on external funding. Not just from governments” (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 6). Davidson saw dangers of fiscal shortfall on the horizon. He mentioned that he doubts if the full effect of these have yet affected the universities, but its ominous presence was looming. He explained,

I think probably the fact that the universities are now relying much more on private funding raises a danger of sort of pre-emptive self-censorship. No private donor wants to be associated with a controversial institution. I mean, if you are a private donor, you could put your money wherever you want. If you run the risk of associating your money with an institution that is controversial then you would go someplace else. (Davidson, Transcript 1, p. 7)

This reliance on external funding sources by universities stifles the professoriate within the universities, said Davidson. Bronze echoed the sentiment of financial pressures affecting research issues. He said:

Most obvious and perhaps most traditional is governance and partisan agendas. Trying to silence some types of research, which they don’t like. More subtly trying to encourage only certain types of research with carrot rather than stick. So we will fund research about this and we won’t fund research... or we won’t throw any money dedicated to this other thing. We are seeing examples of that right now, with the current federal government (Bronze, Transcript 1, pp. 15-16)

These assertions establish that financial pressures directed research into certain areas and not in others. In effect, it promoted a culture of silence by steering away research investigations from unsavory areas.

Citing the case of Olivieri and the culture of his own university, Henley identified “the primary threat is the influence of corporations” (Transcript 1, p. 8). He warned that the relationships between corporations and universities begin on friendly terms, but as the relationship burgeons, first subtle and then overt pressures start being applied. By way of example, Henley said,

There was a researcher in France who was doing some really interesting research in the university. Then he got hired by a pharmaceutical company, and that research suddenly stopped. Basically, it was said to him, “No, we don’t think that’s of interest. Too speculative. It’s not addressing our bottom line.” (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 5)

This suggests that the quest to uncover inconvenient truths is sometimes sacrificed when external companies get to control the academics.

Anderson summed up the issue this way: Due to financial shortfalls, professors are reduced to being “freelance researchers asked to work on projects that suit industry interests” (Anderson, Transcript 1, p. 10), and although that applies more directly to pre-tenured faculty members, those who have been acculturated in that environment are likely to continue on the same track.

Foreman said that financial crises spilled over onto the teaching aspect: “As universities are less well funded, the entire need for student numbers as an income source and different forms of applied research as an income source become much bigger factors”

(Foreman, Transcript 1, p. 11). The effect of relying on funding through student enrolments, according to Foreman, had led to university efforts being spent on student retention at all costs, sometimes putting “undue pressure on faculty members to pass students” (Foreman, Transcript 1, p. 12) thereby perhaps undermining educational standards. Foreman also said that faculty members’ criteria for choosing an area of specialization, especially if they were in one of the discipline areas that did not enjoy high student enrolments, was also affected. He cited an extreme example wherein a faculty member was circumstantially forced to change or reinvent himself at great personal and professional costs. Foreman warned that such trends would become commonplace if chronic underfunding were to continue:

A colleague of mine in the Faculty of Business is in management. He’s very successful, a high ranking professor, a major player in service, I might add, does a lot of applied research because he’s in different kinds of mediations and negotiations as an expert at this, has a PhD... He told me he had a PhD in Anthropology, and he realized, “Are you kidding?” It’s a really neat subject, but if he ever got a job, which would already be a miracle, then he would be in this tiny department, he’d get no time to do anything, he’d get no support for anything, his profile would be this big, so he thought... Eventually, he and his wife thought what could you do that would have this human sociological dimension to it which would interest you but would not be anthropology, and he chose management. He went back, did his MA, liked it, did his PhD. There is a place where he needed to reinvent himself. (Foreman, Transcript 1, pp. 11-12)

This example illustrates that there was a danger that the effects of financial pressures on faculty members could lessen interest in areas of specialization that were thought as unlikely to attract students for immediate future employment.

Eagles agreed that like other departments and like other universities, her department colleagues, too, were under tremendous pressures to generate funding. She said that her department heads were periodically approached by senior university administrators with demands such as, “You have to do things that bring in money” (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 10). Such demands, in turn, translated to faculty members to pursue research which had the potential to bring in funds from external sources, even if this meant the faculty members were pursuing research topics that were of little to no interest to them. If one gave into such pressures, one necessarily had to suppress academic curiosity in the area of their interest. Therefore, such events contributed to academic silencing.

Another issue that was an offshoot of economic pressures was the quality of students who got accepted to universities and the inflation of university degrees. More students were admitted to universities, either by lowering admission standards or disregarding them. Students in the classes who could not necessarily meet the academic requirements placed additional burden on faculty members and, as a result, necessitated faculty members to spend (or were expected to spend) more time in crafting their lessons for students who might be deficient in the basics. This limited the amount of course content that could be covered in classes and took up more of professors’ time in teaching preparation activity. It had the ongoing domino effect of lowering academic standards and devaluing the earned degree because of reduced content. Foreman said,

We are definitely receiving students who are not as intellectually capable as they were before. We are definitely receiving [students] who are not as academically skilled, which is not quite the same as intelligence, but I think the intelligence issue is there too, as before. This changes the environment that you are teaching in and that has an effect on the research you can do. Because as students become more mature in the discipline even upper-year undergraduates, right, start to participate in different research projects, occasionally are able to co-publish or co-present with their teachers, and you want to bring them on that way, so you want to do that, and those opportunities become more and more difficult. The bright and well-prepared students are still there. It is just that they have a lot of classmates such that if you taught them, there would be people in there who would not know what's going on here, you know. It really does make a difference, and moreover, it takes a lot more time to design and deliver a course for that new breed of student than it does for a more academically oriented student. So that really changes things. That's an academic element because of the way the economy of our society goes. (Foreman, Transcript 1, pp. 12-13)

The financial exigency, by virtue of affecting the university institution, molds the role of the professors such that the ideal functions of the professoriate are not discharged; instead, professors alter their role to remain viable. How long this has been going on or whether such silencing is orchestrated is beyond the scope of this research undertaking, but these lines of inquiry pose more pressing questions.

**Governance issues.** The practices of the university administrative cadre in participants' universities and the provincial government's policy constraints that faculty

members perceived, which led to silencing, were captured under this subtheme. While some participants laid the blame squarely on administrators in their universities, others referred to the issues that fell under the administrative portfolio.

Bronze said that one of the biggest obstacles in discharging professorial duties were university administrators. He said,

I think one of the biggest threats is coming from within the academy. University administrators who are pushing particularly corporate or business agendas at the expense of rigor and diversity. When I hear university presidents saying why don't we have more collaboration with business and who needs philosophy anyway – that is a threat to academic freedom. (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 16)

The example by Bronze implies that university administrators use their positions of power to influence faculty members to engage in some kinds of research and not in others, and this acts as a source of silencing.

Eagles furnished an example of power shifting from faculty to departments to senior administrators and in the process muting faculty voices. She said, “I think that the power has shifted in the university from professors having power to administration having power” (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 11). She provided one example how this operated. She said that faculty members are kept occupied in doing administrative paper work for accountability purposes and that keeps them busy and away from their primary concern, teaching and research:

When I first got here, we didn't push paper very much. We had a minimum amount of garbage to do. It was more about teaching. These days, you're lucky if you've got time to teach because you're busy pushing papers.



We have a two-hour meeting every week just to get through the administrivia that we have to do to keep ourselves afloat. There is a definite sense of pressure and expectations that I think are way beyond the pale. We spend a huge percentage of our time doing work for the administration that has nothing to do with students, teaching, or research. (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 11)

This particular example cited by Eagles indicates how, over time, practices at universities work to silence faculty members by keeping them occupied doing administrative tasks that they do not wish to do. Additionally, this busy work hampered professors' productivity by taking them away from conducting research or improving their teaching.

Eagles also mentioned that peer pressure and academic snobbery worked in tandem to silence faculty members. According to her, some faculty members derided colleagues if they raised objections or questioned assertions based on differences in perspective they brought or differences in criteria they used. By way of example, she said, "If someone looks at you and says, 'You simply don't have the wherewithal to be able to judge this,' well, what are the criteria are you coming from?" (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 10). This undermined the confidence of faculty members, and the atmosphere worked to silence any future questioning.

Vagaries of the ethics review process constituted the ways in which Bronze called his peers threatening or silencing the professors. Bronze asked that the specific examples he cited be omitted, but the topics he addressed were: (a) certain Canadian associations have "formally been objecting to the science-based model of ethics clearance, which does not apply to certain disciplines" (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 16) and (b) Ethics Review Boards' interference in the research process in the name of ethics:

It is not that the ethics folks (and I stress that ethics folks are trying to do their job in a conscientious fashion), it is just that the very exercise itself may be problematic if you don't have the right metric to use, and the metric itself that was initially rolled out wasn't very appropriate. (Bronze, Transcript 1, p. 17)

**Social issues.** The practices germane within universities and departments, as identified by participants, that prevent professors from speaking out either within the universities or societies at large are presented here. The issues raised by Gustafson and Cuthbert straddle social and governance issues alike, but their import on being able to contribute to larger debates within or outside the university prompted their inclusion here.

Cuthbert disregarded economic pressures as the big threat to the professoriate; instead, she posited that colleagues in the department pose the biggest threat to silence other faculty members. She said,

I think there is a huge debate now – emphasis on the corporate links between universities and emphasis on practical and applied research as threats. I don't agree with all of that... I think the biggest threat to academic freedom is again that you have faculty members who are entrenched in departments, who can use their power to abuse newcomers. (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 6)

According to her, this collegial oppression gets enacted by voting against tenure or by “taking other actions that discredit you or undermine your authority in front of your colleagues or students” (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 6). She explained that this humiliation perpetuated the status quo:

They make us very conventional and conservative and afraid to take risks. We don't challenge the status quo. I think they make us mediocre – because people

are afraid to speak out or take risks. They encourage – “go along to get along” – because that is what you have to do. (Cuthbert, Transcript 1, p. 7)

Eagles expressed a similar view. She said that universities were “plagued with people who are brilliant at defaming and misinforming and basically creating havoc with other people’s lives. That is a huge problem” (Eagles, Transcript 1, p. 9).

Both Cuthbert’s and Eagles’s contributions show that the environment was ill affected. In Cuthbert’s case, the environment perpetuated the dominant rhetoric, which led to self-silencing socially within and outside the university. Both opinions also illustrate that there were colleagues within their universities, and sometimes their own departments, who were responsible for causing self-censorship.

In Gustafson’s view, the threat to the modern professoriate, in addition to financial exigency, was public opinion. Financial exigency, Gustafson explained, could lead to change in terms of appointment of faculty members at the same time abolishing the tenure system, as it existed, in favour of long-term contracts. Public opinion, according to Gustafson, could put pressure on universities and speed up the changes that he foresaw coming due to financial exigency. He saw only one obstacle in this being carried through: no university could stand to be the first one to implement such sweeping changes and not face the scorn of faculty unions. Gustafson seemed to think that since most professors did not intervene on public matters, it was unlikely that the public would object to removal of the tenure system.

Another social issue that Henley raised as a possible source of threat to professors speaking out was religious zeal. By way of example, he cited the issue of evolution versus intelligent design being debated in the high school curriculum in some schools in

Canada and said that such debates were much more prevalent across some states in the United States:

I know at high schools it has happened. I talked to a high school teacher who was teaching somewhere in Southern Ontario, I forget where, and he was going to be teaching evolution and basically he was told, “No, no. Just don’t go there. Forget about it. It’s not on the curriculum as far as you’re concerned.” So, he couldn’t talk about that. Here, of course, no one would make such a demand. I mean, you might talk to people in biology, they would never feel restricted although occasionally on campus here, the professor who teaches courses related to evolution, she has occasionally got stuff pasted on her door from, I don’t know, evangelical groups or something. People saying, “You are going to be damned in hell. We will pray for you.” (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 8)

Henley’s example shows that contentious religious topics remain problematic for faculty members to talk about. When professors do initiate, there are sometimes reactions as Henley cited. Faculty members end up self-silencing for self-preservation.

There was also a generational issue that Henley thought prevented people from speaking out. He said,

Well, I’m older now. I think it’s a natural progression as you get older you get more concerned with society and such. When I was younger, I mean, I didn’t. The Vietnam War was going on, and it was sort of “over there.” I can’t really criticize youth nowadays for not taking an interest in what Americas are doing in Afghanistan or Iraq because when I was that age, I was very much the same. You’re out building your own career... I think that’s true ... Professors should try

and give views out to the public more often. Unfortunately, we have this sort of resistance to so-called experts. (Henley, Transcript 1, pp. 9-10)

Henley said that certain professors became the media darlings and were then approached to lend credence to the stances proposed by the powerful elite. It was in reference to these professors that he used the phrase, so-called experts. They offered simplistic explanations that satisfied the media and public palette. He suggested that professors needed to assert themselves on pertinent issues offering real alternatives, not just validating or oversimplifying matters. Henley's assertion cited earlier on this is apropos. Henley advocated that while all professors at all times could not be expected to speak out on all matters, there had to be more than just a few to speak out on important matters. He explained that if there were only very few, they could be dismissed as "one offs" (Henley, Transcript 1, p. 12).

Ishtu did not see many threats that operated to silence faculty members. He said that his colleagues cited political correctness as one of the issues that prevented them from speaking their mind, but he did not consider that as a major problem. He said,

The point that keeps getting brought up is political correctness and the need to accommodate everyone's sensitivities. I give some credence to that. I mean, have I changed the way I speak in class? Yes. Do I feel that it's a major imposition on me? No. (Ishtu, Transcript 1, p. 19)

Ishtu felt that diversity of all kinds (gender, class, and race) in the institutions was a catalyst in pushing the political correctness agenda forward and that it served as an opportunity for him and his colleagues to learn culturally sensitive language. If that meant professors were hesitant to speak out, then it was their own fault.

In summary, there were numerous factors at play at many levels – departments, university, industry, and government – that inclined professors, some more explicitly than others, to resist speaking out against (or for) more powerful forces that aimed to preserve the status quo. Sometimes, despite these pressures, faculty members had spoken out at great personal costs and those cases have been well documented in literature and media (Nancy Olivier case, Robert Buckingham case, inter alia), but the issues expressed here indicated that there were many more everyday cases wherein, for reasons of self-preservation and to fit in or get along, professors self-censored, and this preserved professorial silencing. The consistency with which each participant spoke about the financial pressures being faced by the professoriate indicated that it was one of the biggest threats to the academy in its current form. The range of other responses that led to the silencing of the professoriate was also an indication of the diverse pressures felt by the participants to remain silent. A pictorial summary of these responses are depicted in Figure 3.

### **Chapter Summary**

The participants in this study came from different backgrounds, different departments, and two different universities. After presenting the descriptions of all nine participants in the study, the cross-case analysis of the data collected revealed three



*Figure 3.* Pictorial representation of professorial silencing.

distinct arenas: (a) professorial role, (b) professorial power, and (c) professorial silencing.

These three themes emerged as a response to the questions concerning the role of professors, rights and freedoms embedded in the role of professor, limitations and obstacles to discharging their role, and the perception of public intellectuals. The following chapter turns to the issues of overarching contributions to the knowledge base from the study, the implications of this study to theory and practice, and future research.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In every end, there is also a beginning. Libba Bray (2003)

The purpose of this study was to investigate how university faculty members with tenure understood their role as professors. Tenure was understood to be the institutional means of providing freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts without being targeted for repression, job loss, or imprisonment. It was assumed that faculty members were awarded tenure so that they could fulfill a societal role of being a public intellectual. The study was intended to probe the divide between the opposing forces shaping the issues of academic freedom and power of the professoriate. On the one hand, high profile cases, such as Olivieri (1993) and Buckingham (2014), raised alarm when the academic freedom of faculty members was directly challenged. On the other hand, position papers by veteran administrators (Bok, 1982; Kerr, 1963/2001) have questioned the continuing relevance of tenure. In the debate, there was a marked absence of the voices of the majority of faculty members who had not had to confront attacks on their freedoms publically. They are not desultory academics, and their voices need to be represented in the knowledge base that shapes the debate on academic freedom, tenure, and power in the professoriate.

The study was conducted by interviewing nine faculty members from two universities in Ontario. The major themes emerging from the analysis were professorial role, professorial power, and professorial silencing, which were discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, lessons are drawn from the participants' understandings of their role to inform the ongoing debate on the professoriate, their power, and the university

institution as a whole. These lessons are organized under (a) professorial power and public intellectuals and (b) professorial identity and the changing nature of universities.

### **Professorial Power and Public Intellectuals**

The concept of professorial power relates to both the powers faculty members exert and the powers they experience; that is, powers that enable and obligate. To illustrate: Adams (1987) wrote,

It is difficult to be sat on all day, everyday, by some creature, without forming an opinion about them. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to sit all day, everyday, on top of another creature and not have the slightest thought about them whatsoever. (p. 4)

Participants in this study might have been aware of powers that they experienced, but they seemed unaware of the powers they exercised themselves. Although I had expected a more balanced depiction of power, faculty members spoke proportionately more on the issue of powers present or looming that compelled or forced them to do something rather than on the ways in which they did (or could) exert their power.

Power as described and understood by the participants predominantly fell into the first dimension of power (Fowler, 2004; Lukes, 1974/2005). For instance, participants Anderson, Bronze, and Gustafson rejected the premise that they wielded any power with respect to making students, administration, other faculty members, or the public do anything that they would not have otherwise done. However, when asked about their influence over others, some participants conceded that they might have *soft* powers, a term coined by Joseph Nye (2004):

The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. If you get the others to be attracted, to want what you want, it costs you much less in carrots and sticks. (p. 17)

This third way of attracting or coopting others is what Nye calls soft power. The use of soft power was evident in participants' discussions of the professorial activities of teaching and publishing. Through these activities, professors shape awareness of students by giving them language and metaphors to employ when thinking about the subject matter. Through research and publication, too, they shape the knowledge base of what is proper, appropriate, and desirable. Lukes (1974/2005) calls this mode the third dimension of power. The chief characteristic of the third dimension that is invoked here is a "thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus" (Lukes, 1974/2005, p. 28). In contrast to the second dimension of power, which mobilizes bias by rewarding desired behavior, the exercise of power from the third dimension, actually changes the wants of people. Lukes explains, "A may exercise power over B by getting him [sic] to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants" (p. 27). This dimension of power is in operation when professors' teaching and research shape public wants.

The idea expressed by participants that the power to shape one's thinking is inferior to brute force was surprising and troubling. As Fowler (2004) and Lukes (1974/2005) point out, the exercise of power from the third dimensions has subtle but long-lasting result of changing a person's thinking. The finding that participants saw their

power to influence others as minimal or ineffectual was an indication that they were unaware of the potency of the powers they wielded. Savoie (2010), in describing soft powers, wrote,

In looking to locate power, one learns that hierarchy and organizations matter less than they once did, and soft power now accounts for a great deal.... Sticks and carrots are still important, but only for a minority of decision makers.

Networking, an individual's credibility, and the opinion of experts have come to matter a great deal in both the public and private sectors. The rise of the individual and of soft power also ... are a reaction against collectivism and elaborate but slow-moving institutions and processes. (p. 192)

Savoie's assertion suggests that within a university, individual power is more potent than systemic means of exerting power. From this standpoint, professors hold an influential and, hence, powerful position. The inability of the participants to realize that they wielded this power is an indication that it operates in subtle ways and can only be recognized by professors if they consciously reflect on their practices and deliberately set out to uncover power practices.

Although participants largely claimed not to have power, they sometimes referred to professorial power as gatekeeping. Bronze, for example, stated that it was one of the influential powers he acquired upon gaining tenure and being asked to be a blind reviewer for journal articles. Professors, in their role as reviewers of submitted articles, guard (prevent and let through) what is accepted and used as credible knowledge, thereby exercising power to legitimize knowledge. In French and Raven's (1959/1993) lexicon,

these are expert and legitimate powers and participants expressed awareness that their role included such power.

Many participants equated power with controversy and wanted to distance themselves from it. They expressed feeling powerless in the face of turbulence within their university and the changing expectations of workload. Five of the nine participants, for example, described power in ways that would place them in Hagberg's (1984) powerlessness stage. In this stage, power is seen as a commodity that one either possesses or not, and this representation is precisely how the participants described their relationship with power. Foucault (1977/1994, 1980) disrupted the view of power as a commodity with the conception of a decentralized model of power, wherein power is enacted in interactions with persons or institutions, not as a finite currency. Foucauldian power "is not to be thought of as the property of particular class or individuals who 'have' it, nor as an instrument which they can somehow 'use' at will" (Lukes, 1974/2005, p. 89). In this representation, groups of citizens, including professors, become powerful entities in society when they harness productive rather than repressive aspects of power through influence and shaping discourse. This is the method by which power relations are enacted between professors and students, administrators, each other, and the public.

The evolving concept of professorial power had many components, operated on many dimensions, and often appeared to lurk below the reflective practices of the participants in the study. The results suggest that power, as an ever-present element of interaction between any two or more entities, needs to be better understood by the professoriate in order to harness its desired effects, which might include personal and public persuasion, critique, and ameliorative attempts to shape social policies, *inter alia*.

Many participants railed against corrosive aspects of power that were perceived to be antithetic to their professorial work. However, they were reluctant to air their concerns in public because, as Côté and Allahar (2012) have noted, “Professors who speak up about job-related problems can expect to be chided for not being grateful for having such a job” (p. 97). This is a subtle exercise of coercive power that shapes discourse within universities by thwarting questioning, debating, and critiquing, which are all essential for the advancement of new ideas. Since the creation of new knowledge is also one of the chief responsibilities of tenured faculty members (Newman, 1852/1960; Robinson, 2004b), stifling such engagement of the professoriate leads to professorial silencing.

Professors in this study felt or were silenced when any combination of these three circumstances existed:

1. There were financial pressures on universities, which put extraordinary powers in the hands of university administrators.
2. There was undue interference with professorial work at the departmental, university, or governmental levels.
3. There were social pressures.

Under such duress, participants felt subtly steered by peers and administrators to curb their critiques. Côté and Allahar (2012) posit,

At their core, these types of reproaches smack of a ‘wage-slave’ mentality that dictates that workers should not upset their ‘masters.’ At the very least, this subservient attitude reflects a resignation to the necessity for an authoritarian hierarchy of workers, a system that can breed conformity, mediocrity, and a lack of creativity, all of which are anathema to *knowledge-production*. (p. 98)

The subservience of professors creates an artificial hierarchy that is not conducive to knowledge production, especially when there was interference in supporting the research projects professors undertook.

When the circumstances that lead to silencing last for a long time, the effects can be injurious. Participants in this study, for example, claimed or suggested there was seldom a reason to speak out. Those few faculty members who did speak publically, and who were referred to as media darlings by several participants, spoke on relatively noncontroversial issues in order to retain a place on the platform from which they could speak. The sustained suppression of the critical voice of professors can cause an ethos of silencing to seep into the professoriate, which can lead to professorial self-silencing. This is akin to Foucault's (1975/1977) notion of self-surveillance:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (pp. 202-203)

By choosing to remain silent, participants were exercising this type of power. According to Said (1993), such actions could be considered those of a technocratic intellectual, who is primarily concerned with the content aspects of the issues rather than its critical application. Self-silencing as it emerged in this study is an example of how the third dimension of power or soft power acts on the professoriate to achieve compliance.

Silencing professors harms more than just the professors; it also harms the society. Both the present and future generations are ill-affected when silence serves to

exclude or marginalize. Through these effects, silence becomes an instrument that levels the richer meanings to which the discourse might otherwise lend itself.

### **Professorial Identity and the Changing Nature of Universities**

A crucial element in exploring professorial identity was to investigate participants' perceptions of the ideal role of professors. On the one hand, there was no general consensus on what such a role would entail. Several participants suggested that the professor's role should be unencumbered by external expectations, regulations, or inducements of what a professor should do in terms of research or teaching. They argued that professorial work and research topic selections should be a personal choice driven by curiosity. On the other hand, two participants insisted that professorial work must be closely responsive to societal expectations and guided by societal needs. According to these two respondents, this was not a matter of personal choice but of social responsibility. Other responses fell somewhere on the spectrum between these two poles.

A consistent element in the discussion with participants concerning professorial role was the distribution of duties. All participants at some stage referred to their work responsibilities as a split between 40% teaching requirements, 40% research requirements, and 20% service components. Despite this consistent distribution of work responsibilities, participants constructed their professorial identity differently. Two participants made reference to other research-intensive universities where the unwritten but accepted norm was that work distribution was skewed in favour of research as much as 80% research, 10% teaching, and 10% service. What is salient about this result is that the university of affiliation, the context within which the university operates, and the forces that affect professorial work shape professorial identity. This finding is consistent



with Jones's (1998; 2014) assertion that universities are localized and can differ considerably from each other.

For these participants, the ideal professorial role was affected by the ethos of the particular university in which they worked. The participants from the two different universities, for example, had a different lexicon when describing the same concepts, and the participants who also had been affiliated with other universities understood their roles differently while employed at different institutions. At a more granular level, there was notable difference in the understanding of the professorial role based on Faculty affiliation.

This finding of professorial identity as being shaped by university and faculty affiliation indicates that the participants understood their position to be a boundaried career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Dowd & Kaplan, 2005). A boundaried career is defined as "bounded or organizational long term career," in which "people [are] in orderly employment arrangements achieved through vertical coordination in mainly large, stable firms" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p. 3). Since faculty members work within the quasi-independent or quasi-autonomous institution that awards them tenure, the ethos of that institution seeps into the understanding of their own role. Tenure-track faculty members follow the rules, customs, and expectations of their university. Through the process of attaining tenure, participants' understandings of their roles were shaped by institutional norms and customs, as faculty members are acculturated into the professorial role within the institution. Dowd and Kaplan summed up the six salient characteristics of a boundaried career: (a) "identity derived from employer," (b) "does not perceive self as mobile," (c) "loyal to employer," (d) "looks to employer to manage career," (e) "risk-

averse,” and (f) “views career as one-organization model” (Dowd & Kaplan, 2005, p. 703). The characteristics of the boundaried career convey the prospect that one would stay in the same organization, climb through its ranks, and adopt the particularities of that organization, which would be reflected in the shaping of one’s professional identity. When viewed in this sense, the participants’ descriptions of their work position the professorial career as boundaried.

However, an alternative view was also evident in the data. Four participants exhibited some traits of boundaryless careers, partly because they had worked for different employers, had held different positions, and had opted to chart their own career through a variety of professional experiences. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), boundaryless careers are replacing boundaried careers because of the change in the nature of funding models adopted in the Western world:

What we saw in the 1980s as short-run cost cutting – shaving off excesses in the internal labor market to pay off corporate debt services from mergers and acquisitions – has become a prolonged groping for more efficient, adaptive, and imaginative ways to organize work. (p. 370)

Due to the changing economic context, which Arthur and Rousseau describe as “more than disorder or even chaos” (p. 3), the traditional concepts about work and time no longer apply and a new concept of a boundaryless career is emerging. Within an academic setting, boundaryless career means that the professor “draws validation – and marketability – from outside the present employer” (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996, p. 6). This validating source could be the discipline, various professional or special interest groups, or even self-motivation. The result is that the ties to the employer are much weaker when

compared with the boundaried careers. The characteristics of boundaryless careers as summed up by Dowd and Kaplan (2005) are: (a) individual identity is not derived from one employer, but rather, self and/or profession; (b) individual perceives self as mobile; (c) individual is “not loyal to one employer;” (d) individual manages one’s own career; (e) individual is willing to take risks; and (f) individual views career as a series of steps (p. 703). These traits were present to some extent in the data drawn from four of the participants. This result indicates that the categories of boundaried and boundaryless careers, while useful in understanding the inspiration of one’s professorial role, are not mutually exclusive. Despite the fact that some participants had aspects of their professional career that could be classified as boundaryless and others had careers in the same university for their entire lives, there was also a crossover of other traits that did not allow for a neat classification of their careers as exclusively boundaried or boundaryless.

A related finding was that faculty members were carrying out more tasks other than teaching and research. To participants, this pressure “to do more with less” was an ongoing concern, best articulated by participant Eagles who saw increased administrative work and interference in the selection of research topics as common but undesirable features in shaping professorial identity. The framework of new managerialism (Deem et al., 2007) is useful for making sense of this finding. According to Deem (2008), “The characteristics of new managerialism vary somewhat by sector but include an emphasis on the primacy of management over all other functions and a concentration on ‘doing more with less’” (p. 258). In practice, the depletion of resources had placed more pressures on participants to perform more administrative and support tasks. Professors were increasingly expected to do more activities themselves that were previously

performed by support staff members. Moreover, some participants stated that university administrators attempted to influence the kinds of research projects in which faculty members engaged, with the direct aim to partner with outside funding sources so as to mitigate funding shortfalls. The case cited by Foreman, wherein his colleague chose to abandon his area of interest to pursue another area because of financial stability in the latter, speaks to the impact of new managerialism.

Competition is another feature of new managerialism that emerged as an issue for the participants. Deem (2008), writes,

Managerialism is a hierarchical form of organizing practice and so is very different from the collegial self-governance traditional among academics and some other public-service professionals. New managerialism focuses on monitoring the achievement of targets (both at the organizational level and in devolved budgetary sub-units) and the performance of individual employees.

Greater competition both between organizations providing the same service and between sub-units in the same organizations is encouraged. (p. 258)

The stakes of this competition are high – survival of the unit/department, allocation of needed resources for quality programs, and perhaps even survival of the university in question. In such a competitive environment, collegiality is the first casualty, and it was precisely this outcome that several study participants lamented. By controlling material resources, such as money, space, provisions for research activity, and adequate number of skilled personnel (professors and support staff), administrators held the power levers of lines of supply and lines of support (Kanter, 1979). Similarly, by withholding information critical to making informed decisions, the collegial governance model was disrupted.

Through these mechanisms, the referent and expert powers (French & Raven, 1993) of participants were undermined as they performed more support functions and less academic work.

The competition for resources within a university or across universities is bound to feature in professorial identity because the specific university culture influences how professors perceive their roles. But can universities and their administrators be blamed for the shortfall of resources? Participants Davidson and Henley attributed the fiscal problems in universities to the governments that were supposed to fund them. Langenberg (2005) also blames governments for many of the ills within universities. He explains that many universities and colleges started with full state support even when fewer citizens (and a lower percentage of the total population) were attending universities and colleges, but that the funding from states has dramatically declined over the years. Langenberg posits,

When the land-grant universities were created, only a small fraction of high school graduates actually attended college. Yet, Americans and their political leaders were then convinced that these universities were sound investments of public resources that yielded important public benefits. Today, when at least 70 per cent of high school graduates enter post-secondary institutions, and when our nation depends on ever more sophisticated citizen workers, we appear to believe that higher education is not a public good but merely a private benefit to individuals. (pp. 52-53)

Langenberg is advocating the idea that public higher education is a public good rather than merely a private benefit. He is disturbed by the shift in public attitude that purports

the opposite. These impressions are not isolated. In a public survey conducted by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (1992) in the 1990s, nearly two thirds of the respondents said that students and their guardians should pay for postsecondary education. Only 11% of respondents said that state governments should subsidize postsecondary education. The survey result indicated the shift in societal attitude about universities and postsecondary education in general from the founding days of public universities.

In Canada, the first colleges were primarily denominational. After a bitter dispute among various religious factions and governments, it was settled that government assistance would be granted to secular colleges and universities (Jones, 2014). All participants in this study reported that financial challenges had a direct bearing on their role as professors. Participants told of being asked either directly or indirectly to reduce expenses or to build partnerships that would bring money to their university. Langenberg's (2005) analysis on the impact of finances on professorial identity and professorial work supports the position of the participants from this study. He cites numerous speeches by presidents of many universities, who claim that the diminishing support from states has moved universities from being state-supported to being state-assisted, and now many have become merely state-located. Langenberg observes that the public's share in university budgets has been steadily declining through both good economic times and bad. Meanwhile, the public appetite for reduced taxes at all costs is corroding public higher education. Langenberg questions the support from the public for present day universities:

Why are we turning our backs on accessible affordable public campuses? At a time when tax cuts at both the federal and state levels are touted as the all-purpose

nostrum for every societal ill, is there any hope of increased public investment in higher education? Should a public university be supported only by its current users (and perhaps its alumni), even though every citizen benefits from it, indirectly if not directly? And, if so, hasn't it become just another private university? (p. 53)

Echoing the concerns expressed by Langenberg, all participants indicated that financial shortfalls affect a university's ability to attend to the public mission. Instead of seen as providing a public good, study participants suggested that the public views universities as a place where the young are educated so that they can be employed in decent paying jobs. The majority of the participants felt that society did not expect much from the professoriate beyond teaching their young for future employment. It seems that universities, despite having more students attend than at any time before in history, have failed to capture the societal imagination beyond graduating students with better employable skills. Regardless of whether professors play any active or passive role in the public's narrow view of universities and professors, the fact that the participants believed this to be true influenced their own identity as professors.

Three participants in the study expressed apprehension that market forces will define the solutions to the problems of the universities. As Gould (2003) suggested, "We have thrown higher education to the marketplace to solve our curricular problems, and the university has become more and more like a business in recent years" (p. 6). The diversification of functions within universities has come about in response to calls, such as the one from Kerr (1963/2001), who challenged universities to be constituted as multi-versities, not merely uni-versities, by serving society in diverse ways. This has led to a

proliferation of programs, units, departments, and enrolments with no proportionate increase in resources to meet the needs of emerging units, which has generated competition among units to garner adequate resources. The competition for meager resources gives rise to the new managerial ethos: “Different disciplines in the same university are expected to vie with each other for money and even survival” (Deem, 2008, p. 258). Some participants in the study identified this intensely competitive environment as eroding the collegial workplace and undermining professorial work.

Jones (2005) offers a more charitable analysis. He observes that present day universities are engaged in a diverse range of activities, at least some of which have nothing to do with teaching, research, or service, such as running bookstores, parking services, and housing, *inter alia*. It is understandable, then, that certain aspects of university operation would resemble private-sector governance, policy, and missions of self-subsistence and profit generation. To what extent do these activities supplant the chief mission of the university and its professoriate? “In managerialist focus on efficiency, effectivity, performances, targets, outcomes, markets, audits, and league tables, it is also easy to lose sense of what the academic enterprise is actually about” (Deem, 2008, p. 267). Two participants in this study expressed concerns of this kind. They worried that managerialism techniques could shift the central focus of universities away from professorial work to all sorts of secondary or miscellaneous activities that are supposed to support academic work.

The trouble with applying administrative tenets of efficiency to academic work is evident in participant Anderson’s remark that there were pressures to curb his research activities into the kinds of research that would bring in external funding. Efficiency, the



hallmark of new managerialism, has already taken root in European universities. Deem (2008) reports:

Many academics agreed to undertake research in areas where there is extensive funding available but little intrinsic academic interest, as well as continuing to do “blue skies” research. Others wrote short articles that were published relatively quickly while still working on books that took years, because they felt their credibility and survival depended on doing both. (p. 268)

The change in university operations changes the nature of universities themselves, which, in turn, alters professorial work. Participants noted that it took them away from their primary responsibilities of teaching, researching, and serving the public to performing more managerial tasks that have to do with accountability, efficiency, supervision, and surveillance. In effect, new managerialism does not simply mean interference in research:

It also adds significantly to academic workloads, as both the internal requirements and external audit systems work on the basis that academics cannot be trusted to do their work but must continually be checked or show that they have jumped through a series of hoops. (Deem, 2008, p. 270)

Deem (2008) is not alone in identifying the trends in universities that impinge on professorial identity. Gould (2003) also reported that the public has grown dubious of the claims that the public good is served when people attend universities. He states, “Few people still believe in the importance of learning for learning’s sake” and “Students and parents overwhelmingly believe the reason to go to college is to prepare for a prosperous career – but fewer than 40 percent of business executives agree” (p. 14). It is unclear if

this assertion by Gould means that the public is mistaken in assuming that universities prepare students for prosperous careers or whether universities are failing to do so.

The claims from literature about the public's view of universities reflect the majority of the participants' responses concerning society's expectation of the professoriate: nothing more than teaching the students. In one conception of universities, if the current trend were to go unabated, Deem (2008) warns that hollowed out universities will dominate the landscape. Hollowed universities are characterized as "Stripped down to a core of functions largely focused on meeting students and employers' demands and then aggressively marketed to students around the world" (Deem, 2008, p. 272).

Kennedy (1999) presents Deem's (2008) concern in terms of duties that are discharged by the professoriate. He argues that a dynamic equilibrium must exist between universities and societies. On the one hand, universities act as conservators of societies' histories, archive its finest achievements, and pass them on to future generations. On the other hand, universities challenge social conventions, make new knowledge claims, and serve as nurseries for societies' advancements – social, technological, and intellectual. Concerning these two duties, Kennedy writes, "Institutions of higher education reflect society to itself, and at the same time challenge that self-image by asking difficult questions: What have we become? Why don't we do things differently?" (p. 265). Asking these difficult questions sometimes places universities at odds with society. In hollowed universities, however, these difficult questions would not be asked. The second duty articulated by Kennedy would remain unfilled.

It would be troubling if such universities existed because then faculty members working in such places could not be referred to as professors in the way they are generally understood. They would merely be trainers, no different from workers in any other industry. It follows, then, that the ideas of tenure, academic freedom, and professorial power would be things of the past. With such changes, facets of professorial work that have to do with the disinterested pursuit of truth and knowledge and speaking truth to power would also be stripped away, and with that, society loses a critical voice in its midst.

These trends are already taking shape elsewhere. Furedi (2011), in writing about the trend worldwide, describes the situation this way:

Since the late 1970s the culture of academic life has been transformed by institutionalization of the policies of marketization. At least outwardly universities increasingly ape the managerial models of private and especially public sector corporations. Quaint academic rituals and practices have been gradually displaced by management techniques as departments mutate into cost centres often run by administrators recruited from the private and public sector. Whatever one thinks about the cost and benefits of these changes, marketization is a reality that academics have to live with. (p. 1)

It was precisely to this change in the ways of operation within departments and their universities that participants in this study referred.

In summary, if identity is relational, as Buber (1958) has notably argued, then the university's changing context and societal, industrial, and governmental pressures are shaping professorial identity. If the influences of these components on professors are not

enabling and empowering, they limit, restrict, and prohibit full expression of professorial work and professorial identity.

### **Implications for Theory**

This research study was initiated because in the debate on the issues of academic freedom, tenure, and professorial power, there was a marked absence of the understanding of how the professoriate understood their role and experienced their post tenure academic lives. The voluminous disputations on both sides of the divide concerning retention of or elimination of tenure were furnished by well-meaning scholars and presidents of universities, but what was lacking were the experiences of tenured faculty members who had not had the occasion to confront attacks on their rights. This research study was a first step in inviting tenured faculty members into the debate.

The findings from this study advance the understanding of professorial work in new and nuanced ways. The themes of professorial identity, professorial power, and professorial silencing aid in making sense of pressures exerted not only on the professoriate but also on the university institution. Kennedy (1999) wrote,

The pace of technological change, the transient character of employment, calls for the political reformation of everything from welfare to health and safety regulations, and the increasingly critical character of public discourse all create a climate in which traditional institutions, perhaps especially universities, feel besieged. (p. 265)

In this climate of change, pressures, and besiegement of universities and the professoriate within them, the findings from this study contribute to theory in four ways:

1. The language of professorial identity, professorial power, and professorial silencing could enrich discussion and deliberation of the kinds of pressures that Kennedy identifies.
2. The concept of professorial identity has nuances that were perhaps previously missing in the discourse concerning professors.
3. In the face of the kinds of challenges identified by Kennedy, the concept of professorial power can help deepen understanding of ways in which power operates *on* and *through* professors.
4. The concept of professorial silencing explains the subtle ways in which the professorial functions of questioning, innovation, and assertion are eroding. Together, these contributions advance the understanding of the work and environment of the Canadian professoriate.

A summary of these concepts is represented in Figure 4. The three themes of professorial identity (PI), professorial power (PP), and professorial silencing (PS), although primarily related to affairs of university environment, extend beyond it when the professors' role in society is assumed and acknowledged. Consequently, these are represented as overlapping with the university. Also, the role of universities and the professoriate seem to be circumscribed by society, governments, and industries alike. Therefore, these are represented as overarching influences acting on the periphery but able to exert considerable influence on professorial work.

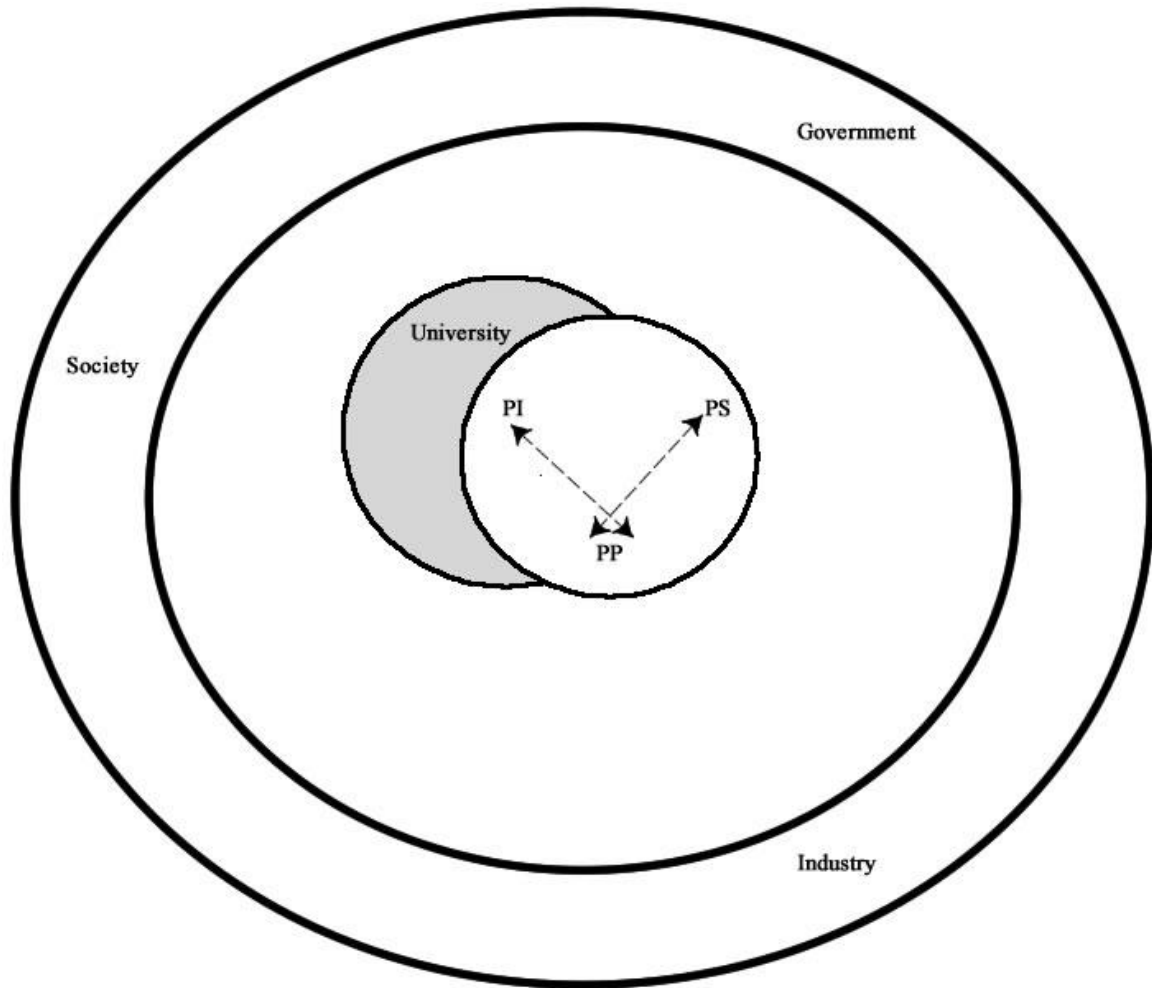
### **Implications for Practice**

In this section, I consider possible applications of the study findings with respect to changes in practice that could prepare academics vying to take tenured positions in

universities. Although this study was designed to enhance awareness of faculty members' understandings of their roles as professors with no direct application to practice, there are a few strategies that could be employed to prepare the next crop of faculty members.

One of the prominent findings from this study was that professors were not aware of how power operates on professors and their institutions in subtle ways, below the reflective practices. Also surprisingly, professors were unaware of how they exercised power in their interactions with students, peers, colleagues, administrators, and subject matter. This highlights the necessity to educate professors on the topic of how power operates and how different power levers could be used as a way to ensure that administrators do not overreach or interfere with the central academic work of professors.

Currently, in most universities, there are no formal structures in place that groom a tenure-track person to assume the social responsibilities of being a tenured professor. Content expertise and one's research agenda are considered primary requirements for selection into the ranks of tenured professors. This prerequisite is no different from the grooming of Said's (1993) technocratic intellectual. Most participants in the study distinctly and directly stated that the chief criterion for gaining tenure was high quality research that yielded numerous publications. Other components of one's work responsibilities, it was assumed, would be automatically and mysteriously imbibed and absorbed. Whether further traits deserving the tenured status included social responsibility or the ability to speak truth to power was unclear.



*Figure 4.* Interrelationship of themes.

It does not automatically follow that there should be formal structures or formal training of new aspiring professors, but there have to be improvements over the current system. Simply adding one more expectation to get training on how to be a tenured professor to an already onerous list of tasks for tenure-track positions would be sinful. Rice and Sorcinelli (2002), regarding the current tenure process state, “More has been heaped onto an already full plate, rendering the whole not only stressful and unmanageable, but also unsatisfying and even distasteful” (pp. 104-105). What form might promote easier induction of future tenured faculty needs to be examined.

As in architecture, there is an accepted adage in organizational theory that form follows function. In order to devise a structure to support well-prepared tenure track faculty members, one must have a clear answer to the question of what functions faculty members are to discharge. In response to the question, it could be persuasively argued that the chief work of professors is to teach, research, and perform service. The complicating factor, however, stems from the impositions placed on professors to do work that is outside those areas. These activities take numerous forms and are motivated by different intentions, including profit generation, community outreach, or administrative efficiencies. The point is that if the answer is too malleable, too diverse, or too unstable, then no structural solutions could be effectively implemented.

### **Implications for Further Research**

In an insightful explication of what all universities do and the complex web of regulations within which they operate, Jones (2005) raises the question of whether we do ourselves a disservice when we claim the core functions of universities as teaching,



research, and service. The participants in this study and I as the principal researcher were guilty of this charge. By way of example, Jones (2005) states,

Universities maintain classrooms, laboratories, and libraries, but they also run restaurants, residences, counseling services, publishing companies, art galleries, animal care facilities, daycares, schools, medical centres, and bookstores. This list of activities can be impressively long even for small institutions, and for large universities it may be a challenge to even compile a complete list of operations, services, and specialized facilities. (p. 175)

Jones's (2005) analysis reveals that there are at least two broad classifications of the kinds of activities that take place at any university. One set of activities is primarily concerned with the academic mission of the universities, and the other set of activities is concerned with profit generation and sustaining the activities in the first category. A qualitative study could be conducted with purposeful sampling of university administrators to garner their understandings of what role universities have within societies and how they support or advance that purpose. A study could be designed that would aim to understand power and power dynamics (and conflicts) that are embedded in the role of university administrators.

The diversity of activities within universities that Jones (2005) identifies, those that are primarily carried out by the administrative or support staff, has an impact on how and where universities spend their meager resources, especially when other government regulations, such as health and safety standards, determine what can and cannot be done. The demands on resources to support both activities are numerous and internally coherent. A study could be undertaken to investigate how the resource distribution across

both set of activities – academic and administrative – is determined and implemented. Such a study is warranted since the effects of deprivation had been felt by the participants in this study, and it is clear from the literature that this trend is prevalent across many universities. Both these research undertakings would also attend to Jones’s (2005) call for “more systematic research about higher education in Ontario” (p. 185).

This study aimed to include tenured faculty members’ voices in the discussion on academic freedom and power so as to gain insight into their role. Whether the results obtained from this study hold up in the larger professoriate needs to be examined. A quantitative study to establish whether similar patterns are evident within the Ontario context should be undertaken to examine which elements of the findings and to what extent they can be generalized.

Another interesting study that stems from this is a thorough examination of the role of universities as understood by the professoriate. There appeared to be a degree of ambiguity of the participants’ understanding of what society expects from the professoriate. Other than teaching the next generation, there did not seem to be any acknowledged public good by the participants. Is that, indeed, the case? A systematic study could yield results that could then be used to answer fundamental questions concerning the role of universities in societies.

### **Conclusion: So What?**

So why does it all matter? If the premise is true that faculty members are awarded tenure so they are freed from the worry of retaining their job if they research, teach, and critique unsavory topics; challenge the powers that be; and speak from an informed position on behalf of those who have neither the stage nor the ability to question the

powerful elite, then one has to admit that it is a powerful position. Most segments of society have neither the ability nor the platform from which to carry out such work. If, in the face of this responsibility, tenured faculty members are choosing to be silent or are being muzzled, then an important societal function is not being fulfilled. With the current configurations of cozy government and corporate partnerships and with the public media being starved into oblivion (Wong, 2014), a critical voice in society can still come from the professoriate. However, if the professoriate is being silenced or self-silencing due to external circumstances, or even finding that the platform from which to speak is absent or unfriendly, society loses another, and perhaps the last remaining, critical voice in its midst.

In order for the critical voice of the professoriate to be preserved, it must be free from the control and command of the administrative cadre, the mark of new managerialism that Deem et al. (2007) suggests is prevalent. As early as 1964, Etzioni, in discussing administrative versus professional authority, had cautioned,

Only if immune from ordinary social pressures and free to innovate, to experiment, to take risks without the usual social repercussions of failure, can a professional carry out his work effectively. It is this highly individualized principle which is diametrically opposed to the very essence of the organizational principle of control and coordination by superiors – i.e., the principle of administrative authority. (pp. 76-77)

This zeal to apply the principles of administrative authority, which is what the participants in this study identified, has the potential to strip the professoriate of their professional authority. These results are not isolated. In its survey of Canadian

universities, the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) project, conducted by Metcalfe, Fisher, Gingras, Jones, Rubenson, and Snee (2010), found that “Full professors do not perceive themselves to be as influential as one might predict, given the hierarchical structure” (Metcalfe et al., 2010, n.p.) within universities and the presence of collegial governance. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that, despite a bicameral system of governance ensconced in Canadian universities, the role of the senate is diminishing as universities have become increasingly corporate.

In anticipation of such troubling developments, Etzioni (1964) had warned about the limits of authority. He stated,

The ultimate justification for a professional act is that it is, to the best of the professional’s knowledge, the right act. He might consult his colleagues before he acts, but the decision is his. If he errs, he still will be defended by his peers. The ultimate justification of an administrative act, however, is that it is in line with the organization’s rules and regulations, and that it has been approved – directly or by implication – by a superior rank. (Etzioni, p. 77)

Etzioni’s analysis implies that there must exist separate modes of operation on the academic and nonacademic sides of a university. While the latter could resemble the administrative authority model, the former must retain independence and professional authority. This study has revealed that separate lines have not been maintained within universities, and some faculty members are experiencing constraints imposed by administrative control on their professional realm, or professors fear that inevitably the administrative overreach would interfere with their academic work. Using different terminology but essentially underscoring the same point 40 years later, Rice and

Sorcinelli (2002) state that there exist two cultures within a university: collegial and managerial, and “The tension between these two cultures plays out most dramatically in the tenure process” (p. 105). Acker, Webber, and Smythe’s (2012) study of the tenure system in Ontario universities also reveals a troubling trend of increased corporatization, managerialism, and scrutiny of academic work. Describing the tenure process, they posit, “Participants often hold an uneasy although vague suspicion that something about the procedures is not working for particular categories of people” (Acker et al., 2012, p. 756). This finding, coupled with the results of the Changing Academic Profession survey, signals that new and seasoned veterans alike are experiencing the ill-effects of the managerial shift identified by the participants in this study.

The lessons from the Underhill case that provided the context for this study are still relevant. In a different guise, using more sophisticated and nuanced techniques, the issues of controlling the professoriate in terms of what it is that they do, how they do it, who they speak out against and for, and what managerial techniques are employed are all still relevant. Whether these techniques are used with the intention to subdue the professoriate or are accidental is of no consequence. What matters is that it is felt and perceived by the professoriate. The net effect is silencing – professorial silencing. With this silence, another critical voice of society is lost. The attack on the professoriate and tenured positions is dual pronged. On the one hand, there are attempts to silence the professoriate as explicated above. On the other hand, there is a concerted effort to restructure academic work by eliminating tenured faculty positions. Turk (2008) explains,

Between 1976 and 2005, there was a 233-percent increase in the number of full-time non-tenure track faculty and a 214-percent increase in the number of part-

time faculty, whereas the percent increase of tenured and tenure-track faculty was only 17 percent. (p. 293)

By reducing and eliminating tenured positions, the number of people who can lend their voices on critical issues is decreasing. Consequently, the critical voice is getting weaker. Suppression of the professoriate's critical voice by using ideologies and employing techniques similar to new managerialism could have deleterious effects on many fronts. First, society would lose a reliable source in the professoriate of critiquing initiatives of the powerful elite and evaluating unexamined norms and customs. Second, professors would likely refrain from investigating areas or topics deemed sensitive or provocative, thereby transforming current universities into hollowed universities. Finally, in hollowed out universities, there would possibly be no contributions or challenges to the knowledge bases, and previously established truisms would be repeated in classrooms. Knowledge would remain at the superficial descriptive level rather than digging into the deeper layers of meaning. This could potentially stall human progress. These are troubling projections and forecasts.

Who are the orchestrators of this situation is an area of active debate, but it is beyond the scope of this study. All is not lost, however. The history of universities also provides a glimmer of hope that is important to harbour. Since the inception of universities in the High Middle Ages, there have been unending efforts to mobilize and steer universities toward some agenda or other by different masters. Even the mighty Catholic Church failed to quell the quest for freedom of inquiry with which we associate universities nowadays. If the resourceful church could not contain the free spirit of the universities and the professors that worked therein, "then no one else is likely to succeed

in making them lackeys of the powers that be” (Drury, 2008, p. 206). This does not mean that there would be no harm if things go unabated, but I remain hopeful that the situation will improve.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

Study Title:       **Dimensions of Power: University Faculty Members' Understanding of their Role**

Researcher:       **Rahul Kumar**

Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Coral Mitchell**

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1. Please describe your current post, length of service, area of expertise, and your present research.
2. Describe your role as a professor.
3. Dealing with issues pertaining to knowledge, how is the role of a professor different from others who deal in matters of knowledge?
4. What constraints/restraints exist in the knowledge creation component of your work?
5. What power does academic tenure provide you?
6. What are the threats to academic freedom and what are the sources of threat? As well, how do these threats shape the role of the modern day professoriate? Describe any pressures you may have encountered concerning suppression of academic freedom.
7. Describe what you perceive to be the role of academic tenure.  
What effect did tenure have on your own research, teaching, and service work?
8. Professors are content experts in their respective fields. Should it be their duty to ensure that their content expertise is used responsibly?
9. What would the role ideally be if it were free of external/internal constraints?
10. Why did you choose to participate in this study?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share for me to better understand your role as a professor, or professors' role in general?